

Madam President
Executive Secretary,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Cook Islands speaks on behalf of Pacific Small Island Developing States present here at COP17, and we bring warm Pacific greetings to you all. We align with the intervention delivered by India on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group.

We thank the Government and people of Mongolia for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to us in hosting COP17.

Madam President,

For the Pacific SIDS, the priority is clear: implementation of the Convention must translate into practical action.

We welcome the Executive Secretary's recognition of the particular needs of Pacific SIDS and the Secretariat's commitment to listening and responding to the needs of our region.

For our islands, land degradation and drought are closely linked to food and water security, coastal and soil erosion, saltwater intrusion and soil health. These pressures are particularly significant where land and freshwater resources are already limited.

The particular circumstances of Pacific SIDS must be recognised. Our small, remote and dispersed land areas, limited technical and institutional capacity, and significant data gaps affect our ability to monitor, report and respond to land degradation and drought. Our islands also vary considerably, from high islands to low-lying atolls, meaning that approaches cannot be one-size-fits-all. Despite these limitations, our countries remain committed to meeting our obligations and demonstrating progress under the Convention.

A critical challenge for Pacific SIDS is limited access to high-resolution, quality data that adequately represent our small island landscapes. Global default datasets provide a useful baseline, but often lack the resolution needed to adequately represent the diverse conditions of Pacific SIDS.

Reporting under the Convention must therefore be supported by fit-for-purpose data and realistic capacity. Reporting should help countries understand their land and make evidence-based decisions; it should not become an administrative burden that takes limited capacity away from implementation.

Beyond reporting, requires means of implementation that is fit-for-purpose, coherent, timely, and adequate. Pacific SIDS need sustained technical support, capacity building and financing that recognises our particular circumstances. Without these enabling resources, commitments made here will remain difficult to translate into action on the ground.

Madam President,

As the Executive Secretary reminded us, restoring hope is not only about negotiations in the room or decisions on paper. For Pacific SIDS, progress will be measured by what those decisions deliver for our countries and communities, particularly those affected by drought and land degradation.

I Thank you Madam President