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AT: OXFORD UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY FOR THE
OXFORD FELLOWSHIP SEMINAR, 30 AUGUST TO 1 SEPTEMBER 2017**

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen.

Vinaka vakalevu or thank you to the European Capacity Building Initiative (ECBI) and Oxford Climate Policy for organising this very valuable seminar.

I'm honoured to be speaking tonight on behalf of the incoming Fijian Presidency for the 23rd Conference of Parties. Fiji is proud to be the first small island developing state to preside over the COP23.

As an island nation, we are bringing the urgency of climate action to this COP. Our goal is to make COP23 a visionary COP and energise the spirit of the Paris Agreement. We aim to do this by demonstrating the continued global commitment to climate action and working towards the full implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Fiji plans to focus its efforts on strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable nations to climate change and on forging a grand coalition between governments, civil society, the scientific community and the private sector to accelerate climate action.

I'm pleased to see that during this seminar we have been addressing many key issues that are relevant for us as incoming president of COP23.

As the incoming Presidency, we have developed a few priorities for the upcoming COP23 in consultations that we have had over last several months.

1. Facilitative Dialogue: We plan to complete the scope, design and modalities for the 2018 Facilitative Dialogue at COP23. Without going into the details of inputs and outputs, we will need to give a clear framework to ensure that the Dialogue is delivered in 2018.

In the lead up to the COP, we have conducted transparent and all-inclusive consultations, together with the Moroccan COP22 Presidency. We will be working closely with Poland as President of COP24 to ensure the smooth delivery of the Dialogue in 2018.

We intend to adopt the concept of "talanoa": a process of participatory, inclusive and transparent dialogue. Talanoa builds empathy and leads to decision-making for the collective good and moves the global agenda forward by focussing on the benefits of action.

2. The Paris Agreement Implementation Guidelines: We expect to adopt a text (or steps) in a draft form that clearly paves the way to agreement on a package of decisions in 2018. We would like to see balanced progress on all elements, which is important to ensure the delivery of the guidelines in 2018.

We wish to ensure the progress made at COP23 provides certainty to the world that we are moving in the right direction and with the right speed towards finalisation of the Guidelines in 2018. And to ensure that we are on track, we need to have a timeline.

3. Gender and Local Communities and Indigenous People's (LCIP) Platform: Fiji plans to adopt the first Gender Action Plan and operationalise the LCIP Platform. This is to ensure that the benefits of climate action are equitably shared with those more traditionally marginalised. It is reassuring to see the strong desire for this that has been expressed during this seminar.

4. Adaptation, Loss and Damage: "Taking care of the most vulnerable": As the incoming Presidency, we plan to make clear progress on the replenishment of the Adaptation Fund and provide a pathway for the Adaptation Fund to serve the Paris Agreement.

We plan to launch the Clearing House for Risk Transfer under the Warsaw International Mechanism to consider including Loss and Damage in the SBI Agendas for the May sessions to provide a greater opportunity to progress the work programme of the WIM. This is a priority of PSIDS and AOSIS.

5. Oceans Pathway: As a small island state, Fiji would like to draw a strong link between the health of oceans and climate change. Climate action and policies need to consider the impact on oceans. Developing a pathway through 2020 that strengthens the ocean/climate linkage by highlighting the role of oceans in existing negotiating items and the Action Agenda and building support for a more integrated programme of work.

Moving on to the Global Climate Action Agenda, we aim to forge a Grand Coalition to accelerate climate action before 2020 and beyond.

This will be a coalition between civil societies, the scientific community, the private sector and all levels of government, including cities and regions. This is the area where we would like to leave a legacy for SIDS. I urge you all to join the Grand Coalition by offering your support, advice and action.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please also allow me to elaborate on a few areas that were also discussed in this seminar – not from the perspective of the COP23 Presidency, but from that of a small island state:

On climate finance, we would like to see finance for the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions flow to developing countries and small island states faster and easier, for instance through simplified fast-track procedures. This has been a common concern expressed by all vulnerable states whether they are SIDS, LDCs or landlocked countries on the African continent.

At COP23, there will be about nine agenda items related to finance. Some of these will include COP guidance to GEF and GCF, discussions on the long-term finance goal, review of the functions of the Standing Committee on Finance and others.

On adaptation, we hope that COP23 will result in useful guidance and decisions that will inform and support adaptation action and planning by developing countries.

In preparations for the COP, we will be holding the Pre-COP in Fiji from 17-18 October 2017. This will be preceded by a Partnership Day on 16 October for State and Non-State actors, for enhancing Climate Action Agenda.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to end with great appreciation for the level of engagement in this seminar. I must say that the spirit of the discussions in this seminar truly reflects the Talonoa spirit that we would like to bring at COP23. It has been very enriching and will bring immense value to our preparation for the COP.

Thank you for your attention.