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TOKELAU – OPENING STATEMENT

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Mr Chairman, I thank you for this opportunity to address the Commission. Let me begin by thanking the Government and people of Korea for their magnificent hospitality in hosting this 5th Session of the WCPFC Commission. This is my delegation's first visit to Korea and we have been received with great warmth and courtesy. I would also like to acknowledge you Mr Chairman for your energetic and wise leadership in this critical early period of the Commission.

Mr Chairman, Tokelau is the one of the smallest island developing states. To participate in this Commission is very important to us but it is also very difficult. To us it requires a major commitment of resources to meet the reporting requirements, to work through the documents and get to meetings when we can.

We have been making that commitment because of the importance we attach to the Commission's work. We believe in the Convention because it reflects many of our own values - we depend on tuna and the other creatures that are affected by tuna fishing.

Domestic tuna development is the single most important opportunity we have for sustainable development and improved economic welfare. We value the tuna resources, we harvest them cautiously and we don't waste them. We are looking to the Commission to bring these values to bear in its work.

We understand that some Commission Members, especially some of the largest, have huge economic interests in the region's tuna fisheries, and it is difficult for your businesses to adjust to new ways of being involved in these fisheries and to downscale.

However, for Tokelau, it is essential to ensure that the Commission is effective in avoiding depletion of the region's tuna stock on which Tokelau depends. At the same time, we will manage the resources in our own waters in ways that encourage domestic tuna development and to create opportunities for the people of Tokelau in tuna fisheries.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Hon. Kuresa Nasau

Minister of Economic Development, Natural Resources & Environment