



Statement by Senator the Hon. Maxine McClean, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados to the High-Level Segment of the 15th Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Mr. President,

Barbados wishes to join others in congratulating you on your election to the Presidency of the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC. You can be assured of our continued support and cooperation. At the outset Barbados wishes to associate itself with the statement made by Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS).

As a country on the frontline of the fight against climate change, Barbados is acutely aware of the consequences of delayed or insufficient global action to address this challenge. Two years ago, alarmed by the findings of the 4th Assessment Report of the IPCC, the international community decided to craft a response which was urgent, ambitious and comprehensive in scope, and consistent with the demands of science and needs of the most vulnerable. Few would agree that we have fulfilled our mission in its entirety or lived up to the promises made at Bali. It is the measured view of Barbados that in both substance and form, the draft outcome presently under consideration for adoption tomorrow, falls short of what is required to safeguard and protect vulnerable developing countries. We are deeply concerned about this state of affairs, and like many other vulnerable countries, we hold the view that a weak agreement is worse than no agreement at all.

I am reminded of the words of US President John F. Kennedy who once said (and I quote) **"While we proceed to safeguard our national interests, let us also safeguard human interests"** (end quote). Uttered over 40 years ago in the context of a historic effort to bring humanity from the brink of total nuclear annihilation, these words remain relevant today as we seek to respond to the yet another global crisis of our own making. Back then, the political consequences of the decisions to be taken were no less daunting, but despite seemingly insurmountable odds, political will was mustered and leaders across the ideological divide agreed to address, what was at that time, the greatest threat to humanity.

Mr. President,

Our generation with the wealth and knowledge at its disposal has no excuse for failing to respond urgently and ambitiously to avert a climate catastrophe. Failure to grasp this moment and the extraordinary political momentum generated by the convening of this Conference, will represent a moral failure of unprecedented proportions. We must fulfill the sacred promise of handing over a secure future to the next generation. We must spare no effort and offer no excuses for an absence of political fortitude.

Despite these disappointments all is not lost. Barbados is confident that we can learn from the lessons of the past two years. We must decide here in Copenhagen to finalize a comprehensive legally binding agreement as soon as possible, but no later than the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The world needs an agreement that will deliver in full on the requirements of the science and ensure that we avoid the worst impacts in vulnerable developing countries.

As no one is spared from the adverse impacts of climate change, no country should claim exemption from being part of the solution. We must all play our part. As part of its contribution to the global mitigation effort, Barbados will scale up significantly its efforts at improved energy efficiency. We have set an ambitious target of 30% integration of renewable energy into our energy mix as part of our strategy to become the most advanced Green Economy in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Our hope remains that the Copenhagen Agreement prioritizes and provides incentives for the diffusion and use of renewable energy in all countries, as this represents the safest and most proven mitigation option available.

The adaptation needs of SIDS, LDCs and other vulnerable developing countries must be accorded the highest global priority. While we recognize and commend recent announcements by some developed countries to provide short term financing, these pledges fall way short of the requirements. There is a pressing need to significantly scale-up and sustain adaptation financing over the longer term. Climate change is not a short-term problem and vulnerable developing countries require massive long term financial commitments from developed countries.

Mr. President,

Barbados stands among over 100 countries calling for an agreement that ensures that global long term temperature increase does not exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Those who are coalescing around the call for a 2 degree Celsius goal will not be confronted with impacts on the scale and ferocity that Barbados, and other SIDS will be forced to address, and must consider our plight when deciding on a long-term global goal.

Mr. President,

Barbados believes that despite the complexity and enormity of our task today the technologies and tools for action exist and there is political awareness of the urgent need to address this critical issue of climate change. The task facing us as leaders is to translate this broad political consensus into a living breathing legally binding agreement. We must craft an agreement that will provide certainty in the fight against climate change and ensure that we bequeath to future generations a secure inheritance.

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