



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

STATEMENT
BY
THE HONOURABLE PATRICK MANNING
PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
AT THE
COPENHAGEN UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE
CHANGE CONFERENCE HIGH-LEVEL
SEGMENT

COPENHAGEN DENMARK
17 DECEMBER 2009

Salutations

Honourable Mr. Lars Lokke Rasmussen, President of
COP 15 and

CMP 5 and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of
Denmark

Your Excellency Mr. Yvo de Boer, Executive
Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention
on Climate Change

Heads of State and of Government

Distinguished Ministers of Government

Heads of United Nations and Inter-governmental
Organizations

Delegates, distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to address this historic Copenhagen Climate Change conference where much is expected. The outcomes of this conference will have significant impact now and in the future on every citizen of the world.

I extend my deep appreciation to the Government and people of Denmark for the warm welcome accorded to me and my delegation, and for the excellent arrangements and hospitality which we have enjoyed since our arrival.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, as we enter the high level segment to this most important meeting on climate change the significance of this meeting weighs heavily on us as leaders to take control of the outcome to this meeting.

The urgency for a decision is dictated, in my mind, by the plight of the most vulnerable nations. What we can do at this point requires an understanding of the circumstances in which major emitters from the developed and some emerging countries find themselves.

Many are unable, and some unwilling, to make the deep commitments required, both for mitigation and financing. For some the need for an agreement now in Copenhagen that becomes operational immediately, is an exercise in academic dialogue, while for others- the most vulnerable amongst us- it is a matter of survival, and life or death.

I believe that as leaders of nations we must think in terms of possibilities and use our collective wisdom and experience to push for an agreement that takes us forward with hope.

- Two weeks ago in Port of Spain Trinidad, at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting the leaders of 51 nations united around a consensus on climate change when many thought and expressed the view that this would not happen. Well it did. We produced over a three day meeting period the
- Port of Spain Climate Change Consensus: The Commonwealth Climate Change Declaration.

As Chair of that meeting I saw the way leaders of the Commonwealth took a broader view of their national interests to agree on a statement in support of this meeting here in Copenhagen. Then, as now, I believe that we have it in us to agree on what is required within the time allotted to us as heads.

There are many proposals before us on mitigation measures and fast track financing, among other critical elements for an agreement. Yet we see a breakdown occurring that threatens to derail the focus on achieving agreement now. It is important to emphasize that without an agreement there will be no efforts to reduce emissions at levels that can halt the slide toward climate crisis.

And most importantly for many vulnerable nations no money will be made available to fund the implementation of critical adaptation measures and again for the worst affected, the relocation of citizens. We must proceed with these realities in mind. As leaders we have the capability to leave here with an agreement. We did it in Port of Spain, we can do it in Copenhagen.

We note that over the years, and more recently, over the last two weeks, a lot of work has gone into formulating a text for an agreement. Yet the breakdown occurs in part where some believe that key countries must increase significantly their commitments to reduce their emissions of harmful green house gases.

We urge those nations to increase their commitments to reduce green house gas emissions, and to recognize their responsibilities as the nations listed among the biggest emitters, to do even more. The consequence of not doing so is increased trauma and peril for many of our friends in the Pacific islands and other SIDS and African countries, among others. A meaningful agreement at Copenhagen requires a consideration of national issues in the context of how what we do as nations impact our neighbours. Let brotherly love prevail.

Additionally, alongside the call for more ambitious commitments we call for a system of oversight on mitigation actions in line with commitments made so that progress toward achieving change can be evaluated to ensure we are addressing the climate challenge.

* We categorically reject any attempt to measure emissions on a per capita basis. This discriminates against countries with small populations and favours those with large ones.

Such a verification system should involve a combination of international and national mechanisms for ensuring that nations adhere to commitments agreed upon. In the absence of such a verification system we will not be able to monitor progress toward eventually reversing the climate challenge. Without verification in place we will not know if what we do at these meetings is enough.

On the issue of funding for climate change we have acknowledged that there are proposals on the table for fast start funding constituting grant funding mainly for adaptation. This was part of the Port of Spain Climate Change Consensus where Heads proposed a Copenhagen Launch Fund at \$10 billion per year starting in 2010. Fast start funding for adaptation should be focused on the most vulnerable countries, and should be scaled up beyond 2012.

We propose that a workable governance arrangement to allow quick access to such funds already exists in regional development banks. We support Ethiopia's call therefore for regional development banks to be the place to manage climate change funds. These institutions are already equipped to satisfy the governance arrangement required for transparency, accountability and quick disbursement that are critical to implement what we agree here in Copenhagen. There is a need for deeper discussions on the way forward for long term financing and the framework for this should be agreed here in Copenhagen. This is possible and as leaders we can achieve what is required of us. We did it in Port of Spain, we can do it in Copenhagen.

A matter of concern to us as nations, and particularly so for vulnerable nations, is the need for an agreement that results in immediate actions being taken by developed and developing countries on mitigation and adaptation, as well as on the short term funding arrangements.

To do this we as leaders must unravel the complex issues around the transition from Kyoto to Copenhagen. The urgency of action **now** from all nations suggests that a lag time for implementing what we agree here is not acceptable. I believe that a solution lies in our hands as leaders. Let us commit to implement, without delay, nationally appropriate actions as developing countries, and to agreed targets for developed countries so that there is real, meaningful and immediate action toward reducing green house gas emissions.

A deeper study of this is of course required but the goal is for all nations to take action now. Many are already doing so, but we need all nations involved to solve this global crisis.

As I close let me share with you our national position on this critical issue. In Trinidad and Tobago we have a vision for developed country status on or before the year 2020. Our vision includes continued investment in industry, and we have achieved world excellence in exports in ammonia, methanol and LNG. However we are mindful that the industrialization paradigm needs to be refocused on efficiency and the development of technologies that would reduce or avoid carbon emissions.

In this regard we support the further consideration of Carbon Capture and Storage in geological formations (CCS) with a view to include this and other technologies that have the potential to take significant amounts of carbon dioxide from our atmosphere, in any outcome of this conference and thereby support the achievement of ambitious emission reductions.

As an energy producing country we power our development in large part using natural gas, which is one of the cleanest fossil fuels. We can and will do more. For example, we have embarked on a program to increase the accessibility and encourage the use of compressed natural gas to power vehicles.

In Trinidad and Tobago we are examining our situation and are willing to make deep cuts in our emissions of green house gases as far as technology and human behaviour change efforts will allow. In addition, with respect to renewable sources of energy, we are looking currently at the potential to include solar and wind energy as alternative energy sources. We are also pursuing an increased reforestation program which has been undertaken in the past under two programs. The avoidance of deforestation will also be pursued with greater intensity and we commend the progress on discussions on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries (REDD) and look forward to positive decisions coming out on these issues.

We are determined to make our contribution to world prosperity in all of its meanings; these include healthy social and natural environments for all citizens in every nation to enjoy a high quality of life in spaces of their choice.

This aspiration to a high quality of life for our citizens is of paramount concern for all of us as leaders. We therefore aspire to the same goals for our citizens. In my country our motto is ***Together We Aspire Together We Achieve***. These words were commended to Heads at the Commonwealth meeting in Port of Spain by the very distinguished UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon.

I commend these words to the world, and specifically to leaders here gathered. Let us make a greater effort to achieve that to which we all aspire. We did it in Port of Spain two weeks ago, we **will** do it here in Copenhagen.

May Almighty God bless you all.