

Check Against Delivery

**STATEMENT TO THE SIXTH CONFERENCE OF PARTIES
TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY**

BY

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Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the member states of the Caribbean Community which are Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and which are present at this meeting, namely Antigua and Barbuda, The Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, St. Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and my own country, Jamaica.

We are participating in this meeting in record number, reflecting the urgency and importance which we attach to the issues before us, and demonstrating our commitment to the process in which we are engaged.

Let me at the outset associate the CARICOM states with the statement made by the distinguished Minister for Lands, Survey and Environment of Samoa, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States.

Mr. President,

We find ourselves at the start of this Ministerial session at a disturbing impasse. The Subsidiary Bodies have submitted to us heavily bracketed texts on principles and mechanisms designed to operationalize the Kyoto Protocol, which more than two years of negotiations have failed to reconcile. This circumstance is disheartening in the message it conveys. For these issues are fundamental to the effective implementation of a regime to protect the global climate system for the benefit of present and future generations. They are the essence of that commitment

expressed in the Convention, based on equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

This impasse assumes an even more serious perspective when we consider that the most recent emissions and inventory data submitted by Annex I countries show very little movement toward achieving the Convention target to return emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000. Indeed, many in this group have already exceeded 1990 levels by more than five percent. This bodes ill for the targets agreed in Kyoto.

The broader picture that these circumstances present, leaves us to conclude that we are witnessing a calculated retreat from the letter and spirit of the Convention and its Protocol. Certainly, we have not seen a demonstration of the necessary political will, nor the effort to negotiate in good faith that would indicate otherwise.

Instead, the past three-year exercise to flesh out the mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol has increasingly become a scramble for short-term gain and the protection of the *status quo*. This has been pursued to the detriment of the ultimate objective of the process, which is the measurable reduction in green house gas concentrations in the atmosphere, to redress the adverse effects of climate change.

Mr. President,

We are now at the moment of reckoning. If we are to achieve at this Sixth Conference of Parties the mandate we set at Buenos Aires, then we will need to renew the spirit of Kyoto. From the perspective of the small island and low-lying coastal states of the Caribbean, there is no other viable option. Our very survival depends on it.

It is well known that the member states of CARICOM are among the group of countries most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Our biodiversity is a function of the climate determinants of the region. The increasing frequency of hurricanes and the effects of other destructive climatic events on our region such as the El Niño Southern Oscillation, the damage to our reefs from coral bleaching, the increasing salinity of groundwater resources from elevated sea levels and the

incremental loss of our coastline to sea-level rise, are among the stark reminders of the urgent task we face in adapting to the impact of global warming.

Despite our limited resources, we have begun the task of adaptation. This afternoon four of our member states will formally submit their Initial National Communications. Several others have theirs in the final stages of completion. In these Communications, we have identified practical, cost-effective strategies towards planning for adaptation.

An important initiative that CARICOM states are anxious to see implemented is the establishment of a Caribbean Climate Change Centre. It is envisaged that this Centre will offer support to the countries of the region in the collection, analysis and dissemination of data regarding climate change, in collaboration with regional inter-agency programmes for coastal zone management, disaster prevention and mitigation in vulnerable sectors such as tourism and agriculture. It will also be the vehicle for the development and transfer of technology in the region.

The establishment of this Centre will ensure that the momentum for institutional strengthening and information sharing promoted through regional cooperation fostered by the **Caribbean: Adaptation to Climate Change Project** (CPACC), will not be lost when phase one of the project ends next year. This project has proven invaluable in providing regional support for CARICOM states' preparation for adaptation activities, particularly through vulnerability assessment, adaptation planning and capacity building.

Our member states have individually undertaken initiatives in furtherance of the central objective of Kyoto. For example, more than 99% of power generation in Trinidad and Tobago uses natural gas, while solar energy constitutes a significant part of power supply in Barbados. St. Lucia, has committed itself to developing a sustainable energy plan for the entire island.

We are more than willing to meet the commitments that we made at Rio in 1992. However, we lack the resources - institutional, technical, financial and technological - to fully and effectively achieve the objectives of the Convention, and to implement

the provisions of the Protocol. In fact, Mr. President, the collective cost of adaptation in the region is likely to exceed the combined national budgets of all CARICOM states. The conclusion to be drawn is very clear. Our socio-economic development cannot be sacrificed for adaptation, but without adaptation we will perish. External support is therefore an imperative.

We are therefore deeply disappointed that our negotiations have still not resulted in agreement for Stage II and Stage III adaptation activities to be financed through the Global Environment Facility (GEF). CARICOM states underscore the importance of the provision of adequate financial resources to support the capacity-building efforts of developing countries, particularly those most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. We also consider that there is much room for improvement in the efficiency, transparency and flexibility in the operation of the GEF financial mechanism. A commitment to full implementation of the framework for capacity building is urgently needed from this meeting.

Mr. President,

The task before us is a formidable one. Meaningful progress can only be achieved if we keep our global objective firmly in view. For our own part, the CARICOM states are prepared to participate constructively in the consultations which lie ahead. As we embark on this crucial phase of the negotiations, we take this opportunity to underscore some of the principles and concerns of importance to us.

On the question of sinks, CARICOM states strongly support an internationally defined biome-based approach for the definition of forests. We believe that potentially, a definition based on this approach is more objective, and reduces uncertainties. We therefore strongly advocate that adequate time be given to ensure further research leading to better definition of the biome-based approach. The issues of measurability and permanence should also be addressed. In the meantime, CARICOM states would advocate that sinks not be included among the flexible mechanisms approved for the first commitment period.

Clean Development Mechanism projects should ensure that real, measurable, long-term benefits aimed at mitigating climate change effects, are achieved. CARICOM

states are of the view that the principle of equity should underpin the implementation of this mechanism. These mechanisms should not provide an incentive for substituting domestic action for the purpose of meeting emission reduction commitments.

Mr. President,

We continue to believe that all Parties here are committed to the objectives of the Convention. Commitment must now be translated into action. We must now take the hard political decisions which are necessary. Time is not on our side, and future generations will judge us harshly indeed, should we fail to seize the moment.

I thank you, Mr. President.