

**17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change**  
**UNFCCC COP 17 / CMP 7**  
**Statement to the High-Level Segment by**  
**Dr. The Hon. Denis S. Lowe**  
**Minister of Environment and Drainage, Barbados**  
**Durban, South Africa, 6 – 9 December 2011**

Madame President,

The street which runs parallel to this venue, Bram Fischer, is named after one of South Africa's most courageous heroes. He chose a path in life that was in collision with those who believed in the notion that human and political rights were to be determined by the colour of one's skin.

As Nelson Mandela once said and I quote *"Bram was a courageous man who followed the most difficult course any person could choose to follow. He challenged his own people because he felt that what they were doing was morally wrong. As an Afrikaner whose conscience forced him to reject his own heritage and be ostracised by his own people, he showed a level of courage and sacrifice that was in a class by itself. I fought only against injustice not against my own people."*

Madame President,

The virtues embedded in the character of Bram Fischer- selflessness, sacrifice, compassion, courage and the vision to act responsibly in the interest of current and future generations - must be at the core of the global response to combat climate change.

This Convention was intended to accelerate collective action to address climate change. Small Island Developing States cannot afford to support a politically expedient deal in Durban that condemns us to an uncertain future, or at worst no future at all.

Madame President,

As, a Small Island State, Barbados strongly subscribes to the view expressed by AOSIS that Durban must deliver an outcome that responds to the gravity of the challenge before us. We believe that the key elements of this response that must be settled here include:

1. Assurance that we remain committed to limiting the global average mean temperature increase to below 2 degrees Celsius or lower, and that we strengthen the multilateral rules-based legally binding climate regime.
2. Adopting a decision that establishes a 2013-2017 five-year second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, with a legally-binding base year of 1990, as part of a two-track outcome.
3. Agreeing on a mandate for adoption of a new legally binding instrument under the Convention which raises the level of mitigation ambition before 2020. This instrument will compliment the Kyoto Protocol, with legally binding mitigation commitments for non-Kyoto Parties, mitigation actions for developing countries, and address all other elements of the Bali Action Plan.
4. Immediately initiating a process to ratchet up the ambition of mitigation pledges to a level that is consistent with the below 2 degree goal we set for ourselves in Cancun and the longer term 1.5 degree aspiration advanced and supported by over 100 vulnerable countries. The 2013-2015 review of the long-term global goal is not a substitute for increasing mitigation ambition immediately.
5. The immediate capitalization and operationalization of the Green Climate Fund; and
6. Greater recognition and genuine support for an enhanced role for civil society in the work of this Convention. They should no longer be on the periphery of the decision-making processes of this Convention.

Madame President,

As Barbados is extremely concerned about the mismatch between the pace of the negotiations relative to the established and agreed urgency on the matter, permit me to speak a little about our national efforts to respond to the climate change challenge as a key component of our sustainable development pursuit.

Barbados has committed to transforming itself into a model green economy that will, hopefully, stimulate similar actions in other developing countries.

We have defined our green economy to be “...*an integrated production, distribution, consumption, and waste assimilation system that, at its core, reflects the fragility of our small island ecosystems.*” Our approach will adhere to the principles of *quality of life, conservation of resources, economic efficiency, equity, and participation* that have been established as the core of our sustainable development thrust. Consequently, we are focussing on establishing policies, programmes and practices that accord due consideration to climate change, as well as all other multi-lateral environmental agreements to which we are a Party, and have a global responsibility.

As a practical example of one of our actions, our green business incentives provide tax rebates of up to 150% of capital expenditure to individuals and businesses involved in the manufacture of “green products”.

We have, and will continue to engage the private sector, labour, academia, NGOs, civil society and ordinary citizens as equal partners in this critical phase of our national development. We recognize their engagement to be an absolute imperative, and are convinced that such transformational initiatives require the collective wisdom of all stakeholders.

The National Sustainable Energy Framework sets the policy context to effect a significant change in reliance on fossil fuels for power generation and, accordingly, compliments the Green Economy initiative. Under this framework, we have established the ambitious target of providing 29 % of our electricity from renewable energy sources by 2029. By 2014, the National Smart Energy Fund intends to finance the installation of approximately 1000 kilowatts of renewable energy generation capacity and produce savings equivalent to at least 500 megawatt hours per year through energy efficiency measures.

Lest we forget, adaptation poses the most significant challenge for SIDS. In Barbados, our responses are most visible in the substantial coastal protection works that we have implemented. Yet, these efforts represent a miniscule portion of the suite of present and future adaptation responses that our nation will be obliged to implement, to cope with the threats posed by climate change. Confronted by this reality, we shall remain engaged in the UNFCCC process, in the hope that the plight of vulnerable SIDS becomes a compelling reason for Parties to make meaningful progress in these negotiations here in Durban.

Madame President,

At his trial for treason in 1966 Bram Fischer stated, and I quote, “*I believe that the future may well say that I acted correctly.*” He was right. Much of what Bram Fischer lived, fought and died for has been achieved in South Africa. How will future generations judge the adequacy of our response to this defining challenge of our time? The window of opportunity for action is closing. Barbados remains confident that inspired by the virtues embodied in the character of Bram and countless others from this great nation, that we will reach an outcome here in Durban which does not consign future generations to an irreversible catastrophe.

Madame President, I thank you.