

President Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, congratulations on your assumption of the Presidency. I extend the warmest greetings from the Government and people of Belize. We are grateful to Fiji and Germany for the excellent arrangements and the warm hospitality.

Mr. President, as the old adage goes - when it seems that things cannot get worse, they do. Just over two months ago, two powerful hurricanes battered the Eastern Caribbean, their destructive force turbocharged by unusually warm seas. Our brothers and sisters in the Caribbean suffered unimaginable devastation. Lives were lost and livelihoods upended. Across the globe we are seeing natural disasters that seem unimaginable, but regrettably are harbingers of a new hostile global climate regime.

The inconvenient truth, Mr. President, is that these extreme hurricane events are not the only evidence that we are now living in a different climate. Belize, as well as other coastal and island states, is suffering accelerated erosion of our shoreline that erodes tourism value, we are experiencing altered rainfall patterns that constrain agricultural production, and bleaching of our precious living coral reef that affect our fishery supplies. Because we are small, low lying, and tropical, we are vulnerable to suffering the consequences of climate change. But it is not just us who are caused to suffer. The lack of sufficiently effective mitigation efforts threatens the very life support system of this planet - our ocean - that threatens all humanity.

Mr. President, SIDS have been living the narrative of climate change and living the struggle for global action to combat climate disruptions. The struggle is real - adaptation is now our way of life. Our own survival necessitates low carbon

development. And so, we lead by example, setting out ambitious plans to reduce our already negligible emissions and invest in our resilience. All scientific evidence suggests that maintaining the 1.5 degrees goal requires a steep rise in ambition and an inversely proportional decline in emissions. Urgency has never before been more palatable. We need to switch gears now and prepare the way for global ambition to take a giant leap forward.

We need to see results. Red lines do not exist on the ground. By the time we arrive in Poland we must have in hand all the decisions that we can act upon to give effect to the provisions of the Paris Agreement. Because the impacts we are facing are not tethered to these negotiations, it is important that we keep a holistic picture of what is happening around us. The momentum unleashed with the Paris Agreement continues despite the decision of the second largest emitter to step back from its obligations. And where one reneges from its obligations, many others including Taiwan stand ready to make every action count.

Many of our economies are highly dependent on the natural environment, and thus particularly vulnerable to climate disruptions. Adequate support for adaptation is a must in meeting the cost of adaptation actions. I must emphasize that those issues for SIDS that impede access to international finance need to be resolved; for example, simplified and expeditious access procedures to the Green Climate Fund. Addressing the capacity gaps that prevent SIDS from accessing climate finance also need to be resolved. Additionally, the number of projects and amount of funding channelled through national direct access entities must be increased drastically if the fund is to be effective.

Mr. President, the urgency for ambition and action is high! Let us take bold steps for the sake of every man, woman and child. Please be assured of Belize's support for a successful Climate Change Conference in Bonn.

Thank You!