



**COUNTRY STATEMENT BY
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Excellencies, delegates, once again, the leaders of the world have gathered here at COP 25, to lament and address the plight of the children of the world. This COP has been dubbed an *ambition* COP and for us, this means the increase in efforts to achieve *all* the goals in *all* the Articles of the Paris Agreement.

The IPCC has released three special reports. Being so small and surrounded by water, we cannot help but be alarmed to know, that with multi-meter sea level rise increases, there are greater risks to economic growth and some island nations may become economically unsustainable and uninhabitable. Islands know firsthand what the IPCC reports mean, when they say that tropical cyclones have become more intense, with more rainfall, and higher storm surges. Our tourism industry, our economic mainstay, is under threat, and similarly, the fisheries sector, given that coral bleaching is on the increase and marine species are shifting away from the tropics and towards the poles. Limiting temperatures to 1.5°C is *still* feasible with more ambitious action taken well before 2030. The science is strong and clear. However, deliberate attempts to deny it and play the role of the proverbial ostrich, sticking our heads in the sand, is utterly unacceptable!

My Government is serious about climate action. In May 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers approved our NDC Partnership Plan, becoming the first country to have a plan validated at that high level. We are also proud to be specifically referenced in a decision at COP 24 in Poland in 2018, having been among the 11 countries of the world at that time to have submitted our Cabinet-approved NAP to NAP Central. So we are doing our part, despite our limitations and the negligibility of our

emissions, but we need to be supported in our efforts; supported in the implementation of our NDCs, NAPs and associated sector plans.

Saint Lucia is putting an *urgent* call out to world leaders. We advocate for the divestment from fossil fuel investments; we call for an end to direct fossil subsidies and the introduction of meaningful carbon pricing schemes. Indeed, after a string of devastating hurricanes in our various islands, year after year, we also call for consideration of the re-classification of hurricanes and the review of Saffir Simpson Scale to include more rainfall impacts. We need a responsive and well-resourced Financial Mechanism under the UN Climate Change regime, for adequate, easily accessible, scaled up, new and additional, predictable and expedited finance to help address loss and damage. We commend those who have taken steps in the right direction. Further, there is an urgent need for clarity under the Financial Mechanism, that support also comprises proposals related to loss and damage, including, *inter alia*, slow onset events like sea level rise and non-economic losses, like human health and displacement.

There is no doubt that we need all stakeholders to join in the efforts to stem climate change and to build resilience. Indigenous communities; NGOs; the private sector; youth, women's groups; nations like Taiwan, yet to be recognised by the UN and its subsidiaries as a bona fide state, but having to respond to the adverse effects of climate change; and yet, continuing to lend its voice to help sister islands like Saint Lucia in their climate action efforts. We need all hands on deck as we combat climate change and its multi negative effects.

The countries with the wherewithal to support particularly vulnerable developing countries like SIDS and LDCs, with their special needs and circumstances, need to stop “play acting” in the negotiations arena, “wordsmithing”, using delay tactics, doing lip service and giving the bare minimum at the end, creating structures and setting up ‘Mechanisms’ that they have no intention of *resourcing* or respecting; playing with the lives and livelihoods of the vulnerable, behaving like we don’t matter.

Surely, we can do better! We can transform our world to a safer place for our children, so we will be able to say that we matched our talk with action. Indeed, as Minister with responsibility for Education, Gender, Innovation and Climate Change in my country, I harbour hope and faith in humanity, and I feel compelled to implore you to make it a priority to complete the work we have started, to take ambitious mitigation action and to provide the finance, technology and capacity building that the world’s children demand of us. I thank you.