



JAMAICA

STATEMENT BY

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**ON BEHALF OF
THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)**



AT THE

**CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL: HIGH-LEVEL
MEETING ON THE PROTECTION OF THE GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR
PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF HUMANKIND IN THE
CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL
DIMENSIONS OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**28TH MARCH 2019
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

Secretary-General,
Madam President,
Excellences,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Caribbean Community. CARICOM fully aligns with the statements of the Group of 77 and China, and of AOSIS.

Allow me to pause to convey our condolences and solidarity to the governments and people of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi who have suffered unfathomable losses as a result of Tropical Cyclone Idai.

It is alarming to contemplate that, super storms such as Hurricanes Maria and Irma and more recently the unprecedented, Cyclone Idai, are stark manifestations of a new climatic norm in which we all stand to lose, if we fail to act.

Madam President, The facts of Climate Change reflect CARICOM's reality; Ocean acidification is contributing to reef degradation. Sea level rise is causing salt water to inundate fresh water reserves, and is contributing to coastal erosion and the destruction of wildlife habitats. The increased frequency and magnitude of coral bleaching and disease is negatively affecting water based tourism. Droughts are becoming more frequent. Loss and damage caused by hurricanes have increased astronomically, and the costs of rebuilding damaged infrastructure along the coasts are disproportionately high for Caribbean SIDS.

Furthermore, rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns and saltwater intrusions are compromising our fresh water resources which have been linked to public health problems and mental health issues.

For CARICOM, the impacts of climate change are immediate, widespread and steadily increasing even at the current 1 degree Celsius level of warming. Worse yet, they are compromising our ability to achieve sustainable development.

Madam President,

The IPCC has made it clear that the trade-offs for sustainable development are much greater for each degree beyond 1.5 C. It has provided a wide angle perspective of what losses globally can be anticipated if we continue with business as usual, and what losses can be avoided if we choose to take far reaching systemic changes to revolutionize our development trajectory toward a 1.5 degree world.

The point that CARICOM wishes to emphasize here is that we have a choice. As the Secretary General has bluntly put it, this is a race that we can win, if only we choose to act.

Madame President,

Over the next decade we can choose to urgently accelerate the transition to renewables; to halve global CO₂ emissions; to wholly decarbonise the electricity sector by 2050 and, most importantly, completely phase out our use of coal. In so doing, we can increase the likelihood of delivering substantial sustainable development gains for human health, poverty alleviation and access to clean energy.

Governments have an important role in catalysing decisive action but they cannot do so alone. Private sector, other non-state actors and local communities in like manner have a role to play to unlock greater ambition. Here, the climate agenda can benefit from the 2030 Agenda which already provides a framework for governments together with other stakeholders, to implement climate action as an integral part of our sustainable development.

Madam President,

We need to move beyond rhetoric to action.

In this regard, CARICOM underscores the need for international cooperation to bridge the climate and development finance gaps that currently hinder small island developing states efforts for transformational change.

Our countries have set ambitious goals to transition to renewables within the decade. However we lack the critical mass of population to make the per capita cost for that transition affordable and fiscally responsible. We therefore urge the international community to consider these realities by providing increased grant funding and technical assistance for developing countries, so that we can make protecting the climate, an achievable goal for all.

Madame President,

SIDS bear a disproportionate financial burden to respond to a problem we simply did not create. As seen most recently in the Caribbean, losses from climate change

impacts can range from anywhere between 30 to well over 200 percent of GDP. Indeed, we may even be financially disadvantaged if our already high climate exposure is used as a measurement of investment risk. Compounding our financial position even further, is the categorization of Caribbean SIDS as middle- and high-income countries based solely on GDP, and the unsustainable levels of debt that many of our Members face.

As we look to the synergies of the climate and development agendas, we urge the international community to examine innovative approaches to improve the fiscal position of CARICOM Members consistent with our vulnerability profiles and to open up or enhance channels for access to grant-based and concessionary financing. We encourage further efforts to consider the application of debt swaps, debt cancellations or debt moratoria for countries dealing with the exponential costs of responding to climate change.

CARICOM looks forward to the Secretary General's Climate Summit, the Mid-term Review of the SAMOA Pathway, and the Review of the Warsaw Implementation Mechanism on Loss and Damage, as opportunities for global leaders to finally provide bespoke finance solutions for SIDS.

Madame President,

CARICOM is hopeful that today's event will inspire all of us to contribute our fair share to the ambition needed for climate action. We are particularly hopeful that it can send a strong signal to the world but especially to all young people that we will do what it takes to secure their future once and for all.

Thank you.