

Honorable CVF Troika Members,  
V20 Focus group representatives  
Excellencies, Ambassadors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address you to at this important dialogue representing the government of Ethiopia I would also like to extend my warm gratitude to all of you for coming to this important event.

As the first African country to ever chair the CVF and V20 for the past two years, Ethiopia was honored to take up the helm of this important body.

What does the future hold for us – nations greatly vulnerable to the ill effects of climate change?

We are walking on thin ice. Our future is uncertain because we are facing a crisis that we cannot resolve on our own.

Sea level rise threatens to submerge island nations like the Marshall Islands who joins us from afar today. Ocean warming and acidification is causing irreversible damage to coral reefs, while the sudden shifts from hot temperatures to nonstop rains and in times an absolute lack of rain pose causing uncertainties to agriculture, greatly affecting our food security. The warming climate is now one of the most significant risks for World Heritage Sites, including the Philippines' own Ifugao Rice Terraces. Extreme rainfall and heavy floods constantly threaten lives, livelihood, and development.

Today we are gathering to mark an important transition for the international cooperation leadership of that community of nations which finds itself in what we call the climate frontline.

In the international negotiations, we were not content with what was long known as the “2°C goal” when the Paris Agreement was being drafted. Instead, we pushed for a tougher temperature limit and a 1.5°C global warming goal: “1.5 degrees to survive and thrive” – that has been the motto of the Climate Vulnerable Forum.

Global warming has already breached the 1°C level with unprecedented warming in the past months. We have already borne countless tragedies and losses from recurring impacts of extreme weather events under a 1°C global warming. How much more with higher temperatures?

We cannot wait for the Agreement to take effect in 2020 before we take action. We must continue to rally our respective states and the community of nations to take urgent climate action because global warming will not halt as institutions and nations all over the world stand or act.

Bending the global warming curve to 1.5°C is a moral imperative: it means saving the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people; it means upholding the human rights of the poor and vulnerable; it means ensuring the integrity of our ecosystems.

Although we are not major emitters of GHG, we cannot let our respective economies grow through the ways that caused today's climate crisis; we cannot let human society live in a world fraught with dangers.

Quality of life comes with a price tag, but it is not necessarily beyond the reach of even the most vulnerable nations. Building livable cities and communities requires good planning, careful management of scarce resources and investment in people. It also requires a genuine commitment to the ultimate goal of putting the Earth's and our people's survival foremost over all other concerns.

We now enter a new era of development pursuits, which challenges us to do more, to do better, and to be more innovative. Delivering on our commitments to the Paris Agreement is our way of telling and showing the world that though we are vulnerable, we are not incapable of action.

The 2015 Paris Agreement has been hailed by many as a landmark agreement, but its aspirations will not happen on its own. This is where the role of the CVF becomes even more crucial.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me first to congratulate our Philippine Climate Change Commission for representing the Philippines in the CVF. When Ethiopia assumed the presidency of the CVF two years ago it was following the impressive work of Philippines who lead the Forum through the Paris conference.

When Ethiopia assumed the CVF Presidency, we enjoyed the unequivocal support of every member helping us steer the CVF towards our common goal of being the voice of reason in the climate negotiations and asserting the rights of vulnerable nations.

Under the leadership of Ethiopia, the CVF expanded from 43 to 48 nations. At the Marrakech UNFCCC Conference, we adopted a landmark Vision that guides our efforts to survive and thrive with a horizon through to 2050. That Vision includes commitments to achieve “maximal resilience” of our people, to strive for 100% renewable energy, and to emerge as wealthy nations that meet if not exceed the objectives set out under the 2030 UN Sustainable Development agenda.

We have been working earnestly within the Forum and with our partners towards delivering on our commitments under the Vision. For example, just last month we initiated the CVF “Energy Dialogue” in support of the realization of our 100% renewable energy objectives. Together with the International Renewable Energy Agency, the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative, the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, at New York alongside the UN high-level political forum, it was agreed to establish a dedicated program of technical and capacity support to speed the efforts of our members—and we are grateful for such a collaboration.

There was a leadership lacuna at the COP 22, which we stepped in, and it was the first time for a vulnerable country that is not a major economy to take on this leadership. The CVF raised hope in the international system where there was no hope.

The CVF member also showed their commitment to revising their NDC by 2020

As a group of vulnerable countries, under the leadership of Ethiopia, we have shown our willingness to act at home—and in many cases are doing so concertedly—to reduce emissions, invest in resilience and even to put a price on carbon. One testimony to this is Ethiopia’s 2011 Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy, now mainstreamed into our national development plan: the Growth and Transformation Plan II (2015-2020). The Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (MoFEC) has also established a Facility in order to mobilize and access climate finance from bilateral and multilateral sources to realize this integrated Strategy with an inter-ministerial collaboration that is a key institutional arrangement to underpin effective implementation. It is just such approaches that came to be echoed in CVF and V20 decisions too, such as the CVF Vision from Marrakech and the V20 Ministerial decisions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now, independent of what the CVF itself may achieve, we, of course, need the world's largest and most powerful countries to continue and also increase their efforts. This includes the members of the G20, the G7 and other groupings like the Major Economies Forum, the EU economies, including also developing countries with significant carbon footprints.

Ethiopia, through the work of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation, also chaired the Vulnerable Twenty Group of Ministers of Finance of the CVF member states—what is known as V20, since there were 20 members in 2015 when this track of the Forum’s work is launched. Building on the favourable policy and institutional arrangement for addressing climate change and its impacts, as the chair of V20 group through MoFEC and is pleased to have been working towards strengthening the efforts of member countries in mobilizing climate finance for the fulfilment of actions of our Group together with co-leads, strive to advance the contribution of the three Focus Groups of V20 on: (1) advocacy and partnerships, (2) climate accounting and (3) climate risk. Moreover, we were exercising leadership for climate action to focus on advancing the interests and agenda of vulnerable countries through global negotiations and G20-V20 Dialogue.

We are pleased to hand over the CVF/V20 presidency to the incoming chair, the government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands with the intention to continue to progress the work of the V20 both at the international level and as a motor for the implementation of effectiveness and innovation in financing climate actions at home to carry forward G20-V20 dialogue on climate change, the InsuResilience global partnership where we can further work on these issues together in the spirit of cooperation.

This is a critical time we are in there is so much to be done we have to make sure that parties to the UN Climate Change convention deliver on their commitments at the coming COP in Poland with a tangible outcome from the Talanoa dialogue, the internal UNFCCC mechanism to take stock of ambition, and set of rules that will help us deliver the goals we set out in Paris.

The Marshall Islands gives us hope. They are very vocal and committed to fighting climate change The CVF is in safe hands.

We strive for 1.5°C to thrive and we can do this together. The dream of a safer world needs the cooperation of all countries, and of every man, woman, and child.

If we start today, there is no promise that we will be lucky enough to see the undoing of the damage within our lifetime, but at least, we leave our world with the gift of hope for a better, kinder future.

The Marshall Islands may continue to count on Ethiopia to support these efforts, we remain committed to promote so the objectives of the CVF.

We are certain too that we can count on the continued and growing support of our development partners, which will be such a critical factor in enabling further joint work of our group as we move to intensify these every effort.

Finally, I would like to wish the government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands a success in its presidency for the coming two years.

Thank you.