



22 November 2018
PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

Climate Threatened Nations' Leaders in First Virtual Summit

- Leaders issue Jumemmej Declaration on enhanced national and global climate action
- World's Governments and Non-State Groups called to embolden climate action by 2020
- 48-member state Climate Vulnerable Forum to strengthen national climate ambition

Majuro, Marshall Islands – 22 November 2018: The Leaders of the Climate Vulnerable Forum today convened the first intergovernmental Summit to be held entirely online. The Virtual Summit issued a call to world's governments to raise the ambition of their climate targets by 2020 in order to save vulnerable nations threatened by warming beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius target of the Paris Agreement.

Chairing the Virtual Summit of more than 40 government leaders, President Hilda C. Heine of the Marshall Islands said: "Today we make history together. We are showing that more can be done with tools and means on hand than we might think. We are demonstrating that we can succeed in breaking from the past to face a new future."

Through the Summit's "Jumemmej Declaration"*¹, the Forum's Leaders committed to strengthening their national climate efforts by 2020 in order to pressure World Governments to act. "Jumemmej" is a Marshallese word of seafaring origin calling for vigilance to keep watch against threats.

During the 24-hour online event, which featured interactive debates and live statements from leaders around the world, the Marshall Islands also announced a new and enhanced climate target, or Paris Agreement NDC, highlighting the conviction of the most vulnerable "to move from words to action".

President Emmanuel Macron of France responded to the plea of the vulnerable nations in his statement to the Virtual Summit: "in 2020 our countries should present new more ambitious national contributions and increase the pace of their implementation. France will stay on course," and adding "we must raise our ambitions."

“Decisions that affect our survival are being taken now” said President Heine, while referring to findings of the October Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s Special Report on 1.5 Degrees which indicated that surpassing this level of warming would create unmanageable and existential risks.

“We invite all nations, and all non-state actors, to rise with us and join our Jumemmej Declaration. We need the world to be on watch with us – we need to see each other through the storm together.”

Speaking at the Summit, United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres said: “Climate Change is still moving faster than we are. As those witnessing its impacts, you know we cannot afford any more delays. The world counts on all nations to ensure that the next month’s climate conference in Poland is a success. We need ambitious climate action now.”

Speaking at the Virtual Summit, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet highlighted that “states must strengthen their mitigation commitments and nationally determined contributions, this is a human rights obligation.”

The more than 40 Heads of State, Government and Delegation also constituted the first global gathering of leaders of nations most threatened by climate change, together with Observer leaders, including:

HE. Mr. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh

HE. Ms. Mia Amor Mottley, Q.C, Prime Minister of Barbados

HE. Mr. Iván Duque Márquez, President of Colombia

HE. Mr. Carlos Alvarado Quesada, President of Costa Rica

HE. Mr. Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Prime Minister of Denmark

HE. Ms. Kersti Kaljulaid, President of Estonia

HE. Mr. Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji and President of COP23

HE. Mr. Emmanuel Macron, President of the Republic of France

HE. Dr. Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada

HE. Mr. Jean-Henry Céant, Prime Minister of Haiti

HE. Mr. Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland

HE. Mr. Taneti Maamau, President of Kiribati

HE. Mr. Saad Hariri, Prime Minister of Lebanon

HE. Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of Mexico

HE. Mr. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal

HE. Mr. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Netherlands

HE. Ms. Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand

HE. Mr. Brigi Rafini, Prime Minister of Niger

HE. Ms. Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway

HE. Mr. Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr., President of the Republic of Palau

HE. Mr. Alain Berset, President of the Swiss Confederation

HE. Mr. Rodrigo Roa Duterte, President of the Philippines

HE. Ms. Isabella Lövin, Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate, and Deputy Prime Minister

HE. Mr. Antonio Tajani, President of the European Parliament