

PRESS RELEASE

Vulnerable Leaders Call: COP25 must secure 2020 action for survival of nations

- Vulnerable nations call for COP25 decision to increase ambition of NDCs in 2020
- Aim to mobilize \$20 billion in the next two years to finance innovations for vulnerable economies
- Call for UN Special Rapporteur on climate change backed by new vulnerable nations' Fund
- Bangladesh announced as incoming Climate Vulnerable Forum Chair for 2020

Madrid, 2nd *December* 2019 – Heads of state and government from the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) today linked the survival of vulnerable nations to all parties to the Paris Agreement delivering new nationally determined contributions by 2020 to safeguard the 1.5C degrees limit to warming. The leaders called for a COP25 decision for all nations to adopt higher ambition efforts by next year.

President Hilda Heine of the Marshall Islands said: "The most vulnerable already face death row. Not coming forward with a new, improved NDC – with a stronger national effort – by next year is the same as a government passing sentence on our future. To force our country to die."

The meeting was chaired virtually by President Heine through video-link from the Marshall Islands as a demonstration of low-emission solutions. The event highlighted how vulnerable nations were working on mobilizing \$20 billion of new funds for adaptation and renewable energy from innovative initiatives as the 48-members of the Forum continue to lead on upgrading the ambition of their NDCs for 2020.

President Carlos Alvarado of Costa Rica speaking at the COP25 CVF event said: "It was once said that 100% renewable energy was impossible. Not so! Costa Rica's power sector runs on it most of the year already. If the vulnerable countries can enhance their NDCs by 2020, any country can. Who said it is impossible? Costa Rica expects to make a net profit of \$19.5 billion from our ambition increase by 2050. Major economies, it's your turn to act."

The greatest injustice is that climate change affects most those who are least responsible. It is my personal commitment to ensure that we can achieve strong climate action. We must also deliver \$100billion especially to the most vulnerable countries," said UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres.

The Climate Vulnerable Forum announced that Bangladesh would assume the chair of the Forum in 2020 with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh commenting: "I dedicated my life to the betterment of my people. Just as we are attaining new levels of prosperity, Bangladesh is threatened as a nation due to the inaction of polluting nations responsible for climate change. In a further injustice, the vulnerable nations have been leading with ambition. We need all countries to do their part to protect our people and their rights from the menace of climate change. We demand new action, new efforts by all



in 2020," adding that "Bangladesh is honoured to lead the vulnerable nations in this charge to rally more support from the international community as a whole to secure our survival."

The CVF leaders highlighted that climate crisis represented the most serious human rights issue we have ever faced and called for the creation of a UN Special Rapporteur on climate change, pledging US\$50,000 to support such a mandate of the Human Rights Council from a new CVF and V20 Trust Fund announced at the event to be backed by financial contributions of the vulnerable nations and partner donors.

Speaking in reaction to the announcement at the event, Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said: "Your pledge of support for the possible establishment of a Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change at the Human Rights Council is much welcome," adding that "climate change discriminates on the basis of geography. Entire nations may sink beneath rising tides while drought, floods and war strike others. The presence, voice and leadership of members of the Climate Vulnerable Forum is critical to the drive for higher climate ambition and the realisation of human rights for those persons most affected by climate change."

Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, remarked: "None of us can turn a blind eye to what is happening right now, and what will happen in the future. All of us have a responsibility to tackle the causes of climate change and adapt to its impact." Prime Minister Rutte then announced the first-ever global Climate Adaptation Summit, bringing together Heads of Government from around the world to Amsterdam on 22 October 2020.

Lucie Pélissier, coordinator of Youth on the Move, CliMates, said strong climate action has full support of the youth around the world. "We, the young generation, are ready to step into the future. Where the most vulnerable won't always be the one to suffer. We are prepared to give our entire energy for this transition and co-construct it with you. Let's make together COP25 a crucial step towards delivering more climate ambition and international solidarity."

UNFCCC Executive Secretary, Patricia Espinosa, commented at the event: "Those living in small island States and other vulnerable communities throughout the world have long recognized that the climate is changing with disastrous impacts for their homes, livelihoods and futures," said UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa. "This will only grow unless ambitious and far-reaching action on both adaptation and mitigation is taken immediately by all nations and by all segments of society."

Patrick Verkooijen, CEO of the Global Center on Adaptation and Managing Partner of the Climate Vulnerable Forum said: "There is a real risk that we enter a world of a climate apartheid in the next decades. A world where the wealthy pay to escape and the rest are left to suffer. Today's news goes some way to address what is a very profound moral injustice but far more remains to be done to ensure those on the frontlines of our climate emergency are not left to suffer. The fact is adaptation is not only



the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do as it generates economic, social and environmental benefits – a triple dividend."

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