



Climate Vulnerable Leaders' Event "Midnight Survival Deadline for the Climate"

Statement

by

H. E. Mia Amor Mottley

Honorable Prime Minister of Barbados

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Thank you Prime Minister for the invitation to address this leaders event of the Climate Vulnerable Forum.

Barbados pledges its full support to your chairmanship. Since 2009, this Forum has brought together developing countries which because of their vulnerability, share the same sense of urgency to address the climate crisis. Along with the Maldives, Barbados was a founding member of this forum, and we are still committed to its principles.

Madam Chair, Barbados continues to play its part. My government intends to have a fossil fuel free domestic economy by 2030 at best, and carbon neutral at worst. Following our high per capita ratio solar water heaters, we already have one of the highest penetration rates of electric vehicles per capita in the world. And my administration is supporting the electrification of the government's fleet of vehicles and providing the enabling environment for the private sector to make the transition.

During the past 10 years, the Caribbean has been affected by 40 tropical cyclones, of which 12 attained hurricane strength and eight were classified as major hurricanes. Six Caribbean States are ranked in the top 10 most disaster-prone countries in the world, and all are in the top 50, costing this region 2% of our GDP, every year.

All of the progress made by the world's most vulnerable towards our climate and sustainable development goals is now threatened by the climate crisis, combined with the public health threat of this COVID-19 pandemic. And indeed, the resultant severe global economic downturn that is now following.

Small open economies, which are tourism dependent like mine, have been devastated. We are simply too dependent on travel. Compulsory expenditure on COVID has consumed the financing, intended for climate adaptation and mitigation. We've had literally to spend the money where it was most needed. And in spite of that, we are still in the middle of the hurricane season as you can hear from the rain behind me in this recording, in the middle of a thunderstorm, as I speak to you this morning.

Global greenhouse gas emissions have continued to raise, and are now 43% higher than there were in 2000.

This summer, it was the hottest ever recorded in the northern and southern hemispheres climate change negotiations in 2020 have stalled due to the COVID-19 travel protocols. This is the year that

both developed and developing countries were to signal a much-needed increase in mitigation ambition in the revised Nationally Determined Contributions.

2020 was also the year when the climate finance goal of 100 billion US dollars per year was to be reviewed. The political momentum from Paris five years ago is in danger, my friends, of completely dissipating. The USA will formally withdraw from the Paris Agreement next month. And then in the middle of a monumental global health crisis has announced it has severed its relationship with the World Health Organization.

This means that we need to be vigilant and we need to take note of the significance of this leaders' event of the Climate Vulnerable Forum. The peril of the day, compels the voices of the most vulnerable to raise, again; the danger of the time, requires us all to recommit to multilateralism; the urgency of the moment, necessitates us to use the strength of our numbers, and that strength ought for us to be used with the establishment of a universal vulnerability index that better captures our ability to absorb shocks and to respond.

The 48 members of the Climate Vulnerable Forum must seize this opportunity as well to call for an immediate injection of liquidity into the most vulnerable economies, along with debt restructuring and forgiveness, particularly for COVID related debt, ensuring that we can refinance it into long term instruments, as was done with the British war bonds in order to be able to allow us to better afford what we can do there.

We must demand and seek to engineer a global response at a scale and level commensurate with the immediate challenges faced by low- and middle-income developing countries. We have to rely on each other.

Madam Chair, the stakes have never been higher. Our lives and our livelihoods are at risk, now, more than ever. Barbados's mantra, over the last unprecedented six months of this pandemic has been simple: "There shall be no retreat. There shall be no surrender".

I call upon the leaders of this forum to take up this call in both to the fight against climate, and the fight against the COVID pandemic.

For together, we shall make it, for together, we can overcome, both the climate crisis and the pandemic.

In the name not just of our countries, but more importantly, of our people.

I thank you and wish you all the very best.