



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

Statement

by

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Hello and thank you, Mr. Secretary General, Prime Ministers, Your Excellencies, Thank you all for inviting me to this crucially important event. And thank you, especially to the Climate Vulnerable Forum members and the Global Center on Adaptation for their leadership and organizing this.

Today, billions of people around the world are living in the areas most vulnerable to the impacts of the climate crisis. Many face an uncertain and dangerous present as well as an even more threatened future. The impacts and consequences for humanity, dumping 152 million tons of global warming pollution into the atmosphere every single day, those consequences are here right now and the consequences are increasingly affecting our lives today. For example, in Bangladesh, 10s of millions of people are at risk from sea level rise and that nation continues to be battered by evermore powerful cyclones, year after year including of course this year.

Just two short months ago, over one quarter of the entire country of Bangladesh was underwater, due to heavy flooding. In the past year we've seen similar catastrophic events in Afghanistan, the Philippines, South Sudan, Yemen, and elsewhere. As many countries have set all-time high temperature records this year; two of the members of the CVF, Ghana and Lebanon, are among them.

And even in my own country record-setting forest fires rage on the west coast, while multiple hurricanes have been bearing down on the Gulf Coast. It's clear that the climate crisis is indeed an existential threat and that every nation must treat it as such.

While these impacts continue to worsen, I also believe we are at a tipping point, a political tipping point, where the solutions to the climate crisis are concerned. And I'm so encouraged by the progress we can continue to make; the progress we have to make; the progress we will make.

That progress starts with not just updating the Nationally Determined Contributions from the world's countries under the Paris Agreement, but enhancing the commitments that are built on the foundation of science, and are communicated before the end of this year.

Coal fired power plants that would become stranded assets must not be built, pure and simple. Renewable energy must be used instead to meet the growing energy demand and rising standards of living. Forests and other natural landscapes must be preserved to maintain and sequester carbon and also to protect vital biodiversity and to prevent disease. Wealthier countries must live up to the

promises that they have made or financial support as vulnerable nations make efforts towards adaptation and clean energy transitions.

We have the moral obligation to do these things and to do them with urgency. And we will continue to make progress, whether at the federal level, or through leadership from sub national and regional governments, local governments, businesses and investors.

Over the past few years, all of these entities have been stepping up to say “we are still in the Paris Agreement”. Make no mistake, the American people are still committed to the Paris Agreement, committed to leading the world in solving the climate crisis. With these steps, among others that are taken, we will not only be safer from the impacts of the climate crisis; we will also improve the global economy, create more jobs and more equality of incomes and networks; we will enhance global security; we will have moved the moral compass toward a more just fair and sustainable world.

So once again thank you to the Climate Vulnerable Forum for hosting this event.

Please, keep up the great work.

Thank you.