



Climate Vulnerable Forum Global Parliamentarians Meeting

“Parliamentarians of Climate Threatened Nations Championing Planetary Prosperity”

Statement

by

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Good afternoon,
Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour to speak with you all at this parliamentary meeting of the Climate Vulnerable Forum. In most meetings it is heads of states who garner the most attention but in actual fact to my mind it is the parliamentary representatives who do the hard work - not just of representing the people but of scrutinising and passing legislation.

And it is what parliaments pass as legislation more than speeches given by presidents - and I say this as a former president myself - it is legislation passed by parliaments that ultimately changes the political course of the nation.

So I am hoping that as legislators we can use this CVF parliamentarians forum to learn from each other and to use our skills and powers to forcefully pursue a more ambitious approach to the global climate emergency.

I have only got three minutes so let me get straight to the point of this event. What we need to do as parliamentarians is to make sure that all the legislation is in place that is necessary to get all our nations on a clean energy pathway.

That means, for example, feed in tariffs or tax and duty incentives to encourage clean carbon-free power sources to replace fossil fuels. It will mean power purchasing agreements, PPAs, for our power companies to contract for this clean power.

We don't need to reinvent the wheel each time with the legal language and text needed to operationalise these things. Let us collaborate between parliaments so that we can share best laws passed to rapidly mandate the clean energy transition.

And these transition plans need to be guided by a vision. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina, as chair of the CVF, has encouraged us all to pursue 'Climate Prosperity Plans' which would outline our targets for increasing GDP and economic growth at the same time as exiting fossil fuels. The Bangladesh plan is already underway and is termed the Mujib Prosperity Plan, after her late father the founder of that nation Mujibur Rahman.

These plans will aim to deliver the economic growth and prosperity that CVF countries rightfully demand, to eliminate poverty entirely and allow today's LDCs to reach middle income status by 2035-40.

Achieving prosperity and a safe climate is not an either/or - it is a both/and issue. That is what Climate Prosperity Plans will set out. There is funding available for nations who wish to embark on this process.

More immediately nations face a deadline of midnight on New Year's Eve to submit their enhanced, updated NDCs under the Paris Agreement to the UNFCCC. All CVF nations are committed to achieving this deadline, but please keep the pressure on your executive and civil servants to ensure that this deadline is met. If we can pass motions in parliaments reaffirming the need to keep to this deadline that will also be very helpful.

We cannot be both climate leaders and climate laggards at the same time, and in recognition of this the CVF is running a Countdown to Midnight campaign to make sure all nations get their NDCs in.

As Ambition Ambassador it is my job for the CVF to take our high ambition NDCs - and our "climate prosperity plans" - to form the nucleus of a high ambition coalition that also includes the biggest and most powerful nations.

Now that we can expect the United States back at the table, and that many big emitters are beginning to commit to zero carbon targets, things look more hopeful than for a long time, and I look forward to working with John Kerry, the new climate envoy for the incoming US Administration.

I will tell John Kerry: thanks a lot for helping me get out of jail, but the Maldives is still at risk. The window is closing, but it is not yet too late. We can still save the Maldives, and all of us in the most vulnerable category, from the existential risks of climate heating.

But we have to act now, and it is for all of us as parliamentarians, to take the lead.

Thank you.

ENDS