

Climate Vulnerable Forum Leaders Dialogue
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Culture

lakwe aolep. I am happy to be with you all today at the Climate Vulnerable Forum's Leaders' Dialogue representing the CVF as the Thematic Ambassador for Culture, as well as representing my country, The Republic of the Marshall Islands at this important event.

The 26th UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) is a moment of peak energy for climate mobilization. Culture plays a critical role in the fight for climate change, it is a catalyst in invoking climate awareness and movements to action. As we continue our work to advocate for climate justice, I hope we remember that creativity is what is needed to move forward. Cultural creators and institutions have an enormous role to play in inspiring and propelling climate action. They have the capability to communicate this threat, to engage our deepest emotions to mobilize us and shift our consciousness towards a systemic change.

As Culture Ambassador, I very much look forward to discussing with you all the creative ways we'll be employing the use of culture and arts as we collectively advance urgent climate action. One of the projects I want to share with you all is

Marshall Islands is proud to be a Troika member of the CVF.

I am pleased to be serving as CVF Ambassador for Culture.

We hope the COP will respond to the Dhaka Glasgow Declaration.

We think the Climate Emergency Pact must be possible here as we proposed it.

Meaning real delivery on climate finance. NAP and financing.

And also seeing especially the big countries increasing their ambition each year to keep 1.5 within reach.

It is great that 7 new countries joined CVF and we are now 55 nations.

I want to also brief you about our work on culture:

The CVF in collaboration with the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, and Agam Agenda's has recently launched a call to promote transnational artistic collaborations on climate issues involving different CVF member and non member states, an invitation to conspire and create the Now we need.

Ñaat? When Is Now is a creative, transdisciplinary initiative that invites poets, scientists, visual artists, and emerging leaders to conspire and create the Now we need, calling for stronger climate action. "*Ñaat?*" comes from Marshallese, meaning "When?", with a focus to urgently widen the climate conversation through storytelling and art. The project aims to produce linked poems and murals in all continents, in order to reflect and amplify national and regional demands for urgent climate action.

Like many of you I play multiple roles - not just as an Ambassador for CVF and Climate Envoy but also as a Director for a youth environment nonprofit called Jo-Jikum based in my islands, where we regularly engage with our youth through a summer climate and health arts camp,, funded GCCA+ and WHO and supported by my Minister of Heath's department. I teach poetry and art regularly to students to help transform them from victims of climate change to creators and change makers. It was inspiring to hear from our youth representative earlier about the importance of bringing youth to the table. With this in mind, we have youth who are leading community consultations for the development of our national adaptation plan, who are incorporating art workshops into those workshops as a way of collecting and engaging with the youth of different islands and communities to make sure their voices are heard.

Excellencies, I came to COP because I am singemindedly afraid of what is coming down the pipeline for our islands. We must adapt to survive and to keep our islands above water.

It is time we use our voices to lift up people's lived experiences of the climate crisis and I urge all the CVF leaders to connect us with the poets and visual artists in your country to contribute new poems and imagery; assist in the process of creating murals in your country, and promote the *When Is Now* project through your networks and social media. This is crucial to further enable vulnerable country governments to echo the voices of the most vulnerable communities in the world. I also urge you to raise your voices with your Ministries of Culture to help enable other officials to inspire and encourage bolder action among citizens while fostering a deeper sense of accountability for tackling the climate crisis.

As Culture Ambassador, I look forward to advocating for the power of culture as a means to tackle climate change, and continue revolutionize the climate conversation through storytelling and art.

I thank you all.