



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

PERMANENT MISSION OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS
633 Third Avenue, 12th Floor • New York, N.Y. 10017 • Tel.: (212) 697-7620 • Fax: (212) 682-3580

STATEMENT

By

Senator The Honourable Mr. Dennis Moses
Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs
of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

at the

UN Summit for the
Adoption of the Post-2015 Developmental Agenda
Interactive Dialogue No. 4
“Protecting our Planet and Combating
Climate Change”

Sunday, September 27, 2015
Trusteeship Council,
United Nations Headquarters
New York

Mr Co Chairs,

Even with an increase in average global temperatures of less than 1 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels, we have already begun to experience the devastating effects of global warming and climate change in the Caribbean sub region. For small island developing states such as Trinidad and Tobago, and many other highly vulnerable countries, the impact of climate change stands to undermine, and in some cases, reverse our efforts to secure the well-being of our people and achieve sustainable development. For some of us, it is even an immediate existential threat.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda will be well nigh unachievable for those of us grappling with the adverse effects on our resources, fragile ecosystems, infrastructure and livelihoods, caused by climate change. The recent example of the devastation left in the wake of tropical storm Erika, in our sister island of Dominica, is a preview of the plight of small island developing states in a warmer global climate.

Consequently, it is abundantly clear to us that efforts to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda would be thwarted if we do not, as a global community, take urgent action to address climate change.

Mr Co Chairs,

CARICOM Heads of State and Government have met and declared themselves on their vision for a successful agreement in Paris which would safeguard those on the frontline of experiencing the devastating effects of climate change. To this end:

- they have noted the inadequacy of the global goal to limit average increase in global temperatures to below two degrees Celsius, as it relates to protecting the fragile ecosystems in SIDS;
- they have called for the inclusion of an explicit objective to limit the global increase in average temperatures to below 1.5 degrees Celsius;
- and they have given their full support to the inclusion of specific provisions which set out that Parties must fulfill their mitigation commitments and improve them in the context of five year commitment periods.

CARICOM Heads of State and Government have also called for a compliance regime and institutional arrangements to address loss and damage as essential elements of the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

Trinidad and Tobago fully endorses this Declaration.

Moreover, we submit that the 2030 sustainable development agenda is a clarion call for ambitious and immediate action on climate change. The international community has spent the last twenty odd years painstakingly assembling the nuts and bolts of a global climate change regime. Although we have seen some successes, commitment to action has wavered and in some cases progress in implementation has even been reversed.

We are now at a tipping point. Our window for taking action on climate change in order to set the world on a pathway to limit the increase in average global temperatures to below 1.5 degrees Celsius, is swiftly coming to a close. What we require now is implementation and a serious commitment to action.

Although its contribution to the climate change challenge has been negligible, Trinidad and Tobago is committed to doing its part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to mitigate the effects of climate change. To this end, we have announced our plans to reduce emissions from our industrial and transportation sectors, and we are also in the process of embarking on plans to diversify our economy. The survival of our people should not be put at risk. Our moral, social and political responsibility does not allow us the luxury of doing otherwise.

Nevertheless, as we are all well aware, the particular challenge of addressing climate change requires global action, cooperation and solidarity of the highest order. Governments should lead the way. Those of us with a greater historical responsibility must also ensure that the necessary resources are made available to support more ambitious action in developing countries. The momentum we have gained from the adoption of the 2030 sustainable development agenda, grounded in the principle that no one is to be left behind, must carry us through to the Paris Climate Change Conference in December.

Our stand in solidarity with the impoverished, the marginalized and the vulnerable cannot end with the adoption of a declaration and empty words and promises. The real challenge begins now, and the success of the Paris Climate Change Conference will be a key determinant of the likelihood that we will achieve the goals and targets set out in the global sustainable development agenda.

I thank you.