



## **Climate Vulnerable Forum Statement: High-Level Signature Ceremony for the Paris Agreement**

United Nations, New York, 22 April 2016

It is my honor to address you as the chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum.

It was Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS) who were the first in spearheading the most important provision we fought for – and won – in the Paris Agreement: the promise in Article 2 to pursue efforts to limit global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This is a key component of the purpose of the treaty that all 196 parties agreed to in Paris. It is vital to achieve this goal for the protection and survival of our people and nations.

Since the Paris conference, we are equally proud of the leadership shown by those members of who have been among the first countries to ratify the Paris Agreement. We will continue to work for the rapid entry into force of this Agreement.

Today is a historic day. Over 160 countries are here signing the landmark Paris Agreement. It is being given real life. Like all treaties, the Paris Agreement too is governed by the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. According to that Convention, by signing this Agreement today, countries assume responsibility to act in good faith not to defeat its purpose prior to the 2020 start date.

Our focus must now shift to ensuring implementation and progress towards the aims of the Paris Agreement. In this context, pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5 degrees is really the central figure and not a mere aspirational goal. There can be no ambiguity here – this is now the common task that the international community has set itself.

We also know 1.5 is achievable with much greater action in the pre-2020 time period, –we know it can be done. For this reason, we need to fully implement the pre-2020 Action Agenda, including effective technical examination processes for mitigation and adaptation to spur new multi-lateral and multi-stakeholder cooperation for launch at COP22. It is of course no secret that an enormous amount of effort will be required to bring us on track to reach our temperature goal given the world is currently headed for 3 to 5 degrees of warming, but we cannot wait until Parties begin implementing their nationally-determined contributions in 2020.

To stay on track for 1.5 degrees, we will also need to see greater effort than is currently on the table for post-2020. In particular, all countries can resubmit more ambitious contributions under the Paris Agreement by 2020. So we call on all countries to accelerate their domestic efforts pre-2020, so that they are also in a position to bring forward even greater contributions for post-2020. For developing countries, this will require the rapid scaling up of climate finance provided by developed countries. The science is perfectly clear: if no new action is taken until 2023 or 2025, it would simply be too late to achieve the 1.5 degree goal.

Moreover, the longer-term low GHG emission development strategies must also account for the 1.5 degree limit.

We are extremely pleased that the IPCC concluded at its 43<sup>rd</sup> session in Nairobi last week to develop a Special Report on 1.5 degrees to be published in 2018. It will clarify the requirements for keeping to the 1.5 limit and the impacts avoided through achievement of this goal. That said, the bulk of the science basis the IPCC will draw upon is already available to us all right now. Therefore, the work on aligning contributions and strategies with 1.5 begins not in 2018, but today.

The vulnerable countries will do all we can to increase ambition to the limits of our capabilities. But, in accordance with the Paris agreement, developed countries must also take the lead with regard to both reducing their own emissions and providing support for developing countries.

Multiple issues arising from adverse impacts of climate aggravates the challenges to achieve 2030 sustainable development agenda.

Even today, the world's poorest groups – the hardest hit – are completely overwhelmed by climate shocks. The means of implementation from countries who bear greatest historical responsibility for the climate crisis, in the form of adaptation finance, is a critical need for groups that otherwise lack the resources to cope. Regrettably, funding for developing countries to adapt to climate change remains grossly inadequate, far less than even the limited amounts mobilized for reducing emissions.

Not only does the support available fall far short of needs. Inadequate investment in resilience and coping capacities of vulnerable groups only drives up the costs of humanitarian emergencies, funding for which is also inadequate.

It is therefore a practical, as well as a humanitarian, obligation to ensure that finance is scaled up for both adaptation and mitigation so that there is a balance between them – which should be 50:50 by 2020. We therefore expect to hear from developed countries on how they plan to reach this goal.

We are optimistic of progress on all these fronts, but much work remains to be accomplished. Our Forum will continue to promote effective responses and to work with civil society, business and other stakeholders that share our cause and convictions for bold climate action.

Thank you very much.