



Climate Vulnerable Forum Global Parliamentarians Meeting

“Parliamentarians of Climate Threatened Nations Championing Planetary Prosperity”

Statement

by

Mr. Youssef Nassef

Director of the Adaptation Division and Acting Director, Intergovernmental Support and Collective Progress, UNFCCC

25 November 2020

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair,

Distinguished dignitaries,

Honorable members of parliament,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- There is no doubt that the current global health crisis has lent us a new perspective in approaching both international and national policymaking, and in particular for global risks and hazards such as COVID-19, but also for climate change – a global emergency towards which we are counting down rapidly, all the way to Midnight.
- Before COVID-19, we knew that meeting the 1.5 °C goal to avoid the worst consequences of climate change required transformation at a radically greater pace and scale. ‘Business as usual’ was already not an option. Now, with the crisis laying bare the vulnerabilities of societies, concerted action is all the more essential.
- The major recovery effort needed in the wake of COVID-19 offers an opportunity to reorient our regulatory environments, our policies and our plans in such a way as to build resilience, not only to climate change but also many other major challenges facing humanity that are on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Many of you know that Nationally-determined contributions, or NDCs, are a cornerstone of national pledges for climate ambition. In the coming period, many revised or new NDCs and long-term low-emission development strategies (LTS) must be enabled and submitted. Based on these submissions, the UNFCCC secretariat will prepare a synthesis report which will hopefully demonstrate a positive global transition towards the low-carbon future which we aspire to. Now we are mandated to produce this synthesis report for all NDCs submitted in 2020. Therefore it is imperative that as many countries as possible submit their new or revised NDCs by the end of next month – 31 December 2020, in order to be considered in the upcoming synthesis. This is a major crux of responding to the Midnight Survival call.

- National legislation is obviously an important complement to international policymaking. The Grantham Institute reports that since 1997 the number of climate change laws and policies has doubled every four to five years. Roughly half of the legislation has been passed by the legislative branch, and half by the executive branch.
- We are also noticing that as the number of climate laws rose, the pace of new legislation is levelling off; and also that, while national laws that promote climate action have been increasing steadily, they are yet insufficient to help reach the desired level of decarbonization enshrined in the Paris Agreement.

Ladies and gentlemen

- Ambition is not only about reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is also focused on adaptation – on helping communities adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. To this end, the international community has adopted a mechanism known as National Adaptation Plans, or NAPs.
- The NAP guidelines mention that such planning efforts would benefit tremendously from a legal mandate for each country at national level in order to ensure rigour, seriousness and holistic coverage across all sectors. And we are hopeful that a large group of countries will have submitted their NAPs by COP 26 at the end of next year.

Ladies and gentlemen

- The Climate Vulnerable Forum has consistently called for the highest possible climate ambition in line with the Paris goals.
- At the same time, parliamentarians are well poised to embody this ambition into appropriate laws and regulations that can lock countries into long-term sustainability. The UNFCCC is committed to engaging parliamentarians and has recently entered into an MOU with the IPU to this effect.
- Finally, through an agenda that centres around planetary climate prosperity, we can together ensure that efforts to address climate change and other developmental and environmental concerns proceed with a steady pace. As mentioned in the flyer for this event, parliamentarians are in a unique position to support delivery of climate change commitments by the executive branch. These must be centred around enhanced pledges in NDCs as well as effective NAPs to address vulnerability.

Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen.