

The climate emergency is intensifying each day, and we in the Climate Vulnerable Forum - representing the most climate-vulnerable nations in the world - are on the front line, our nations battered by storms, droughts and rising seas. Yesterday we heard the often-neglected voices from the most vulnerable nations in Africa and the Middle East, gathered for the CVF Africa and Middle East Regional Dialogue. What they said needs to be heard by everyone.

At the top of the agenda now is finance. I was in the room in Copenhagen back in 2009 when it was agreed that developed countries would provide \$100bn a year. Unfortunately this is a promise that has never been kept. According to the OECD the total amount provided and mobilized in 2018, 2017 and 2016 was USD 78.9 billion, USD 71.2 billion and 58.2 billion, respectively. That is a huge gap, and it needs to be filled urgently.

The African and Middle Eastern vulnerable nations also rightly demanded greater ambition from the major emitters. We are still a long way off where we need to be to meet the Paris goal of 1.5C, which in itself poses catastrophic risks for my nation and others. Those major emitters who have not upgraded and updated their NDCs (nationally-determined contributions, or Paris pledges) must do so urgently and well before COP26 in Glasgow.

If there is still a shortfall in NDC commitments required to meet the 1.5C target, then we will need COP26 to establish new mechanisms to raise ambition well in advance of the next NDC submission deadline of 2025. The scientists are very clear that there is very little carbon budget left if we are to have a reasonable chance of safeguarding a 1.5C outcome. We certainly can't afford to wait until 2025 before further mitigation action is taken - by then it will be too late.

On a positive note, I was delighted to see the African and Middle Eastern countries so enthusiastic about the Climate Prosperity agenda, which I have brought forward in my capacity as CVF Ambition Ambassador, alongside HE Sheikh Hasina, Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh, who is the CVF chair. Bangladesh has already completed a draft Climate Prosperity Plan, my nation the Maldives is about to embark on the process, so it is very encouraging to see expressions of interest from so many nations: Bénin, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Lebanon, Liberia, Mozambique, Palestine, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Uganda.

Of course, carrying out a Climate Prosperity Plan is only the first step. After that, we have to raise the finance needed to ensure that these countries can carry out the clean energy and adaptation investment they will need to become fully prosperous, climate-resilient nations. This means measures to address the very high cost of capital in CVF countries, particularly those in Africa and the Middle East. As these countries point out in their communique, we will need "to move from billions to trillions of financial support to close the mitigation and adaptation gaps in developing countries". As they correctly state, the \$100bn a year should be a floor, not a ceiling.

As a lifetime campaigner for human rights, I fully support the effort to establish a Special Rapporteur on human rights and climate change under the UN Human Rights Council. As the communique makes clear: "This is an urgent need for the most vulnerable given the

importance of human rights in the climate crisis and the planetary emergency that is already and increasingly threatening and undermining the rights of all our people and especially most vulnerable groups, including women, children, persons with disabilities and indigenous people."

Likewise, as an elected member of parliament, and speaker of the Maldives parliament (the People's Majlis), I join the call to encourage the active participation of more parliamentarians from the African and Middle Eastern region to engage in the CVF Parliamentary Forum. Here my fellow CVF Thematic Ambassador, Loren Legarda who holds the brief for parliaments, is taking in important role providing inspiration and leadership in equal measure.

It's also great news that Ghana is being proposed to follow Bangladesh as the next president of the Climate Vulnerable Forum after the latter's tenure concludes next year. With the 'Africa COP' on the horizon next year also, this would be an opportune moment for the world to see even more African leadership on climate change. It is the voices of the vulnerable that need to be heard most loudly from now on - especially those from Africa.