



GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Statement

by

the Honourable Gaston Browne

Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda

On the occasion of

the United Nations Climate Summit 2014

United Nations Headquarters, New York

September 23, 2014

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Your Excellency, Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

Heads of States and Governments.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am the representative of a small island developing state that knows well the realities of Climate Change.

We have paid – and continue to pay – a high price for it.

And, we, like many other small island developing states, contribute the very least to the conditions that cause Climate Change; we are the victims of the profligacy of others.

Therefore, it should be no surprise that the people of Antigua and Barbuda, like the people of many other small island developing states, are angry and frustrated.

They are angry because despite all their efforts to develop their economies, despite their efforts to build the infrastructure that would increase their productivity and withstand current impacts and slow onset events, despite their efforts to build the foundations of a better life for their children and grandchildren, the devastating effects of Climate Change destroy their work and set them back year after year, putting our sustainable development pathway off track

And, they are acutely aware that Climate Change is not their doing.

They are frustrated because in this world where big powers talk of democracy, of human rights, and of ending poverty and human misery, they know there has

been reluctance in some industrialised nations even to acknowledge the real and pressing existence of Climate Change.

They are frustrated because the governments of the nations that are among the worst offenders delay in making their contributions to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) launched three years ago to mobilise 100 billion dollars by 2020.

The GCF is yet to receive any funds that can be disbursed to developing countries.

Yet, we, the small and developing countries of the world, are being pressed to undertake climate actions by the very culprits of Climate Change.

Secretary-General, demanding that small states, such as mine, take on more commitments without any financial resources or technology transfer is contrary to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Worse, as the South Centre has rightly pointed out, the demand is immoral.

Only Germany has so far indicated its willingness to contribute 100 billion dollars to the Fund.

Others have been deafeningly silent.

We thank the German government for this stellar example of international responsibility. Likewise we commend those governments who have boldly made commitments today. We urge other governments of industrialised nations not to continue to be shamed by their own lack of action.

In small island developing states, we live the reality of Climate Change.

For us, this is not an academic discussion or statistical game.

We have real economies at risk, and real lives at stake.

For us, the costs are not only to mitigate against the perils of Climate Change now; the costs are repairing the damage that has been caused in the past; that continue to plague us now; and that will define our future.

As the head of a government elected just three months ago, I have to find the resources not only to combat the harsh effects of Climate Change but I have to find the means to provide education, health and social services that my people rightly expect

On top of all this, are the resources that many of the culprits of Climate Change expect small countries, such as mine, to expend on a myriad set of requirements that satisfy their needs for regulation of financial services; for combatting drug trafficking; and for stopping refugees.

My government, and the governments of many small states, are fulfilling their international obligations even though the burden is great.

But it is unfair, unreasonable and unjust that we should struggle to meet our international responsibilities at the expense of neglecting the social welfare needs of our own people.

Secretary-General, in the spirit of international co-operation without which I am convinced our planet will not easily survive, I opted to come to this distinguished forum to plead with the leaders of the industrialised nations to let this Summit make a difference.

I call on the industrialised nations to fulfil their undertakings to provide the funding they promised to the GCF and to instruct their negotiators in Lima in December to honour their governments' word.

Our world, I suspect, has entered a time of impending crisis from Climate Change.

I hope that in this august body, close attention might be paid to my nation's small voice of truth.

Finally, I applaud the Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, for his sterling leadership on this critical development issue of climate change that threatens our home – planet earth.

Thank you.