



**THE PERMANENT MISSION TO THE
UNITED NATIONS**

Statement by

The Hon. Perry G. Christie

Prime Minister

and Minister of Finance

of the Commonwealth

of The Bahamas

United Nations Climate Summit

23 September 2014

Please check against delivery

I wish to begin by congratulating the Secretary-General on his laudable initiative, and I welcome the opportunity to address World Leaders at this Climate Summit on matters of crucial importance to my country.

I want my presence here today to signal that for The Bahamas, Climate Change is serious business. This threatens our very existence. Here is what the scientists say:

Eighty (80) percent of my nation's land mass will be lost if the sea level rises 1.5 meters. They also say that with a warming of 3.7-4.8°C by 2100, as currently predicted, The Bahamas we know would be no more.

It is with this sense of urgency that I address you today.

The Bahamas accepts the science on this issue. We have signed on to all the agreements, yet emissions into the atmosphere continue to grow.

Notwithstanding our negligible contribution to the issue, we are taking concrete steps to reduce our carbon footprint. We adopted a National Energy Policy, which includes the introduction of renewable energy goals of at least 30% of energy generation by way of renewable technologies by 2030.

We also continue to focus on adaptation to climate change, despite our limited access to grant and concessional funding. We have identified the National Policy for Adaptation to Climate Change and work steadily toward implementation with civil society and other key partners.

As we seek to expand our marine protected area, we have established the Bahamas Protected Area Fund (BPAF); and cognizant of the possible impact of climate change on our food security we have established the Bahamas Agriculture and Marine Science Institute (BAMSI) to operate a state-of-the-art comprehensive commercial teaching farm.

We have done this and more to enhance our resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change. We are a low lying archipelagic

chain of islands and are painfully aware of the impact of sea level rise for our country. Everyday the sea is rising, the coral reefs are dying; yet so far all the world has done is talk. The fact is that nothing the world has done so far has stopped this upward trend in global emissions.

The Bahamas calls therefore for a sufficiently ambitious, comprehensive and inclusive, legally binding framework, with commitments strong enough to reverse present upward emission trends.

The survival of small island developing States (SIDS) must be the benchmark for the 2015 agreement.

We must increase global action so as to trigger the necessary shifts in investments, and changes in business models toward sustainable development and renewable energy. We must meet the potential for rapid deployment of renewable energy and positively change the global energy mix.

Having said that, money is important. Nothing can happen without it. Developed countries must honour their financial commitments from Copenhagen. We need a clear pathway for developed countries to contribute what they promised to pay for climate finance support in the amount of US 100 billion dollars a year by 2020.

In this regard, The Bahamas welcomes the progress of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and calls for accelerating its operationalisation, so that the Fund is ready to start disbursing resources by the Paris Summit in 2015. Money for adaptation and coastal defenses is also crucial. None of this should be dependent on the GDP per capita of small island developing States like The Bahamas.

We must look at each country's vulnerability to climate change, its debt and more importantly honor the principle that "the polluter pays". Looked at like this, The Bahamas qualifies for funding and we expect our fair share.

We hope our partners will work with us. We look forward to clear and ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions, and we encourage bold and progressive announcements here today!

Thank you.