43

SEYCHELLES STATEMENT

Delivered by

Ambassador Ronald Jumeau

Permanent Representative of Seychelles to the United Nations

COP-16 High-Level Segment
Cancun, Mexico, 9 December 2010

Please check against delivery

Thank you Madam President

Madam President, the Government of Seychelles congratulates you on your appointment as President of COP 16.

I would also like to associate this statement with those of Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Democratic Republic of the Congo on behalf of Africa, and Lesotho on behalf of the Least Developed Countries.

Where is the sense of urgency Madam President? While some in Cancun are already looking beyond Durban to Cop 18, Seychelles is currently in the grip of its worst drought in history. We were already suffering a new round of coral bleaching, compounded by ocean acidification, and increasingly alarming coastal erosion when the rains failed.

The drought has hit agriculture, forcing Seychelles, which already imports 90 percent of what it consumes, to import more food, adding further to its trade imbalance.

Madam President, our story is the story of all SIDS, some of which spend up to 50 percent of their gross domestic product on imported fossil fuels.

This is why the small islands of AOSIS, which contribute the least to global warming but suffer the most from it, decided to lead by example by launching our own renewable energy initiative here in Cancun.

Yesterday AOSIS joined the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Denmark in launching SIDS Dock.

This will increase the small islands' access to renewable energy while releasing funds used to import fossil fuels for other sustainable development needs.

But while we who are least responsible for climate change are providing a lesson in what mitigation for sustainable development is all about, it does not in any way mean the SIDS will be any less ambitious in the targets we seek.

These are keeping temperature rise to well below 1.5 degrees Celsius and greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere to well below 350 parts per million of CO2 equivalent with emissions peaking by 2015 in keeping with the alarming new findings of the UNEP emissions gap report.

More than 100 countries are calling for these targets and together we represent the most vulnerable and poorest peoples of the world. Some of us face what has never before happened in history: the physical disappearance of entire countries from the face of the earth.

We will not let up in our calls for urgent delivery on the pledges of assistance for adaptation, for equal importance to be given to funding adaptation as to mitigation, and for a mechanism to address loss and damage.

Finally Madam President, anything that is not concluded in Cancun should not be left to wander the badlands of climate change; they should be referred to COP 17 with clarity as to what needs to be done on the road there.

This includes providing clear guidance on the route to be taken, the milestones to be achieved, to reach a legally binding agreement in South Africa.

Madam President, the most vulnerable of this world cannot afford the luxury of time...

I thank you.