Statement On Behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States

by

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Prime Minister of Grenada

and

Chairman of AOSIS

at the Opening

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Madame President, Excellencies, Distinguished Ministers and Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Madame President, it is a pleasure to be here in Cancun, and to enjoy the excellent arrangements and hospitality of the Mexican people. Thank you.

Grenada has the honour to speak on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, a group of 43 members that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

1. Madame President ... the clock is ticking, emissions are rising ... and the deadlines are fast approaching us!

2. It is said that time and tide waits for no man - unless we act now, and act fast, the rising tide of climate change will overwhelm us.

3. The countdown has started to the 2015 deadline set by the IPCC for the peaking of global greenhouse emissions.

4. After that it could become too late to reach the emissions reduction target required to guarantee the survival of our economies and our peoples.

5. A similar countdown has also started for the millions of people living in the Small Island Developing States, the LDCs and the countries in Africa affected by flood, droughts and desertification.

6. These countries are already experiencing damaging impacts of climate related events.

7. We cannot ignore this deadline.

8. We cannot ignore the science.

9. Cancun presents a great opportunity to respond in a decisive manner to this call for **urgent** action on climate change.

10. Madame President, when we get such an opportunity, we should grab it with both hands.

11. In Cancun, we should not settle for token decisions that will provide a beautiful façade, but result in no real action and no significant impact on the problem of climate change.

12. We are discussing a number of issues here, which will assist in getting initial action started on climate change.

13. But, Madame President, while recognizing that we have made a start, what many of us wish to focus on in Cancun, is not enough!

14. It is not enough, because the provisions under discussion on adaptation, for example, do not provide us with the necessary support needed to implement the immediate adaptation actions to respond to the problems that are already being experienced.

15. What we need Madame President, is not just an adaptation framework that lists priorities for action. What we need, is to elevate adaptation to the level of importance that it deserves.

16. We can do this, by establishing here in Cancun, an Adaptation Committee that will bring consistency to the work being carried out at the global, regional, national and community levels.

17. We also need to ensure that provision is made, for the loss and damage that is already being experienced.

18. We call for the establishment of a mechanism to address this loss and damage, through risk prevention and risk management approaches.

19. These approaches must be appropriate to respond to the scale and nature of the loss and damage being experienced.

20. Madam President, these approaches must be supported by financial resources, and therefore the establishment of a new Fund is necessary during this meeting of the COP, with adequate provision for priority access for SIDS and LDCs; and for a process to ensure expediency.

21. There is an urgent need to address the question of the global emission reduction targets.

22. Madame President, just this morning, we were presented with the UNEP Gap Report, which indicated that the emission reduction pledges on the table are far from sufficient to reach the goal of 1.5 degrees as has been advocated by more than 106 countries.

23. But, Madame President, are we doing anything about closing that gap? Are we doing anything about raising the level of ambition?

24. The answer is a resounding NO! …

25. How are we to peak emissions in 2015, if we do not take decisions here to increase the level of ambition to one that is consistent with the 1.5 degree goal?

26. Madame President, that brings me to the question of the Second Commitment Period of the Kyoto Protocol.

27. Why are we delaying a final decision on this?

28. Madame President, a decision to have the Second Commitment Period of the Kyoto Protocol begin on January 01, 2013, is one of the essential ingredients of any Cancun outcome that we are prepared to accept.

29. However, we also need a decision that the results of the AWG LCA process will be a comparable legally binding instrument, that will be ready for adoption in South Africa at next year's session of the Conference of Parties.

30. The practical needs of Small Island States cannot be ignored by this process.

31. In fact, it cannot continue to be ignored by the United Nations systems.

32. We have fought for and gained real representation as small island states in some of the institutions under this process.

33. We expect that such representation will continue to be a part of any new institutions that are established as a result of our decisions here in Cancun.

34. SIDS must be represented under the legally binding instrument that we expect to sign in Durban, South Africa next year.

35. In closing, Madame President, I want to return to the point I started with.

36. The clock is ticking… It is ticking very loudly.

37. Every extra ton of carbon dioxide takes us closer to the midnight hour on this, the gravest threat to our survival.

38. Let us listen, and apply ourselves to the task with a high level of ambition, and a sense of urgency that our survival demands.

Thank you very much.