**16th Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change**
**[UNFCCC COP-16/ CMP-6]**
**Statement to the High Level Segment by**
**The Honourable Donville Inniss**
**Minister Health, Barbados**
**Cancun, Mexico, 08-10 December 2010**

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Madame President,

As a small state, Barbados considers that a strong and effective multilateral system is indispensable for responding to the threats and challenges of a global nature. As the United Nations Secretary General has stated, if we are to address current global challenges, including climate change, it "*will require a multilateral effort of immense magnitude — one that draws upon the strengths and contributions of all the countries of the world, as well as their citizens*". We must all share the burden, and this Convention must be at the core of an effective global response.

Reflecting on what we have achieved since the adoption of this Convention in 1992, and what needs to be done over the next few years to address climate change in the manner demanded by the science, we must consider what improvements are necessary to ensure this regime can truly deliver and fulfill the core objectives of the Convention.

The fundamental legal nature of the climate regime, including the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol, must be defended and preserved. Legally binding international agreements convey the strongest signal of a government's commitment and represent the highest international status of any government's undertaking. We continue to believe that a non-binding outcome from this ongoing negotiating process would be a backward step that would undermine efforts to prevent what is characterized by the Convention as "dangerous climate change". In this regard, Barbados fully shares the view of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) that it is crucial that this Conference arrives at a common understanding of how, when and where an ambitious and legally binding international climate agreement will be finalized. If we fail to send a clear and strong political signal that we remain committed to a regime that provides legal certainty in the fight against climate change, the credibility of this process would be irreparably damaged.

Madame President, while we must continue to pursue the objective of a legally binding agreement, the outcome at Cancun must represent a paradigm shift in the way in which we advance the adaptation agenda. In the Caribbean we have recently witnessed the destructive force of hurricane Tomas. In Barbados over 1500 houses were damaged and, as we are all aware, our neighbors were also seriously affected, particularly St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Haiti. We therefore find it unacceptable that nearly two decades after this

Convention was signed, only 2.5 total full time professional staff members, funded from the core budget of the UNFCCC Secretariat, work directly on adaptation matters – the overriding priority of developing countries.

Madame President, we urge all Parties to support the AOSIS proposals for formal establishment at Cancun of a new Adaptation Committee, an International Mechanism to address Loss and Damage and a new fund. These instruments will assist developing countries that lack the experience, capacity, technology and finance to design and implement adaptation actions to reduce their vulnerability, and adjust to the impacts that are already resulting from climate change, while ensuring that finances are available to address unavoidable loss and damage. At Copenhagen developed countries pledged to ensure a balanced allocation between adaptation and mitigation financing as part of their fast start financing commitment. We are deeply disappointed that this promise has not been adhered to, since less than 20% of fast start finance has been used to fund adaptation activities. Developed countries must move swiftly to redress this imbalance in 2011 by reverting to their own core principle that was clearly enunciated at Copenhagen.

Madame President, a growing body of scientific literature including UNEP's recently released *"Emissions Gap Report"* point to an ever narrowing window of opportunity to avoid catastrophic climate change, the inadequacy of existing emission reduction pledges, and the urgency needed to increase the level of collective effort to reduce global emissions in line with the findings of the 4th Assessment Report of the IPCC. While there is a clear recognition that we have major differences to overcome in the negotiating process, these hurdles must not be regarded as insurmountable, given the severity of the problem that confronts us. Barbados continues to believe that narrow self interests will eventually give way to our collective sense of humanity and fairness, to ensure a sustainable path for current and future generations.

Madame President, I thank you.