BELIZE

STATEMENT BY

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MINISTER OF STATE

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES, FORESTRY, THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 22ND CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC COP 22)

THE 12TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL (CMP 12)

AND

FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT (CMA1)

16TH NOVEMBER, 2016

Thank you Mr. President.

Excellencies , Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to join you here in the beautiful city of Marrakesh. Your hospitality has been unparalleled. We are most grateful for all of the courtesies that have been extended to our delegation.

Mr. President,

Each year, Belizeans are reminded that climate change represents an existential threat for our people. In August 2016, Hurricane Earl made landfall in Belize causing damages in excess of 5% of GDP. This, Mr. President, is the 14th extreme weather-related event to affect Belize in the last 15 years, with some events causing losses equivalent of 25-45% of GDP.

For us climate change represents the greatest economic, social and environmental threat to our country. The adverse effects of climate change have direct implications on the future state of the country, the achievement of our sustainable development goals, and thus the ability of Belizeans to improve the quality of their lives. As we move forward, we must employ an inclusive, long-term and collaborative process to build the resilience of our economic, social and environmental systems. This, however, requires predictable, adequate and fast-tracked financing, at scale, to allow us to meaningfully and effectively face these escalating threats.

Mr. President

Despite these constant and escalating shocks to our development, Belize continues to pursue practical and ambitious actions under the Convention. Our Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) brings cohesiveness and synergies across our economic, social, environmental, and institutional policies. The GSDS aims to achieve sustainable development through poverty eradication, better stewardship of our natural resources, and improved resilience in the face of a volatile global economy and a changing global climate.

In 2015, Belize adopted its first comprehensive National Climate Change Policy, Strategy and Action Plan that identifies priority actions for each economic sector. It seeks to build governance capacity, improve resilience, and enhance adaptation capabilities to cope with climate change impacts.

Mr. President

Belize, notwithstanding our negligible emissions factor, is committed to the more ambitious target under the Paris Agreement to limit the increase in global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This requires global commitment and action. All countries, including the Republic of China on Taiwan, must be allowed to contribute their experience and technologies to meet this ambition.

Consequently, Belize has set bold, national targets through its Nationally Determined Contributions that will allow us to transition strategically to a low carbon development pathway, while strengthening our resilience.

By 2033, for example, Belize is committed to expand its share of renewable energy in the electricity sector from 60% to 89%.

We are also committed to reducing conventional transportation fuel by at least 20% through appropriate policies and investments.

Belize also aims to achieve significant emission reductions through sustainable forest management, which will reduce deforestation and land degradation, protect watersheds and increase the resilience of forest communities to climate change. We will soon approach the Green Climate Fund for funding to conduct our National Adaptation Planning (NAP) process.

Our National Communication Strategy for Climate Change will foster greater public awareness and the engagement of all stakeholders.

Mr. President,

Predictable finance, balanced between mitigation and adaptation, capacity building and transfer of technology are crucial for the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. We thank the developed countries for the early release of the road map to achieve USD 100 billion per annum by 2020. Note, however, that this pledge is but a drop in the bucket of the estimated trillions needed to meet the 1.5 degree temperature goal. We seek your continued engagement to further enhance the roadmap and scale up of finances so as to increase predictability, foster confidence, and ensure that the adaptation needs of SIDs are adequately addressed. Furthermore, where adaptation is not an option, countries must have support for irreparable loss and damage.

Mr. President

The Paris Agreement, and its entry into force, generates renewed trust and confidence in the multilateral negotiating process for addressing climate change. There are three key actions that we can and must take in Marrakech:

- we must operationalize the Paris Committee on Capacity building;
- we must operationalize the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency; and
- we must provide guidance to the GCF to finalize the simplified approval procedures without delay so as to enhance access for the most vulnerable with prioritization to public and grant based support, especially for adaptation.

These outcomes, if achieved, Mr. President, will make COP22 an Action COP.

COP 22 in Marrakech must deliver. We must set the pace for implementing the Paris Agreement. We must establish the accounting guidelines, develop a compliance mechanism, begin to build a robust transparency framework, and global stock-take process with a view to completing our work as early as 2017.

Mr. President, to echo your call for climate action, let us leave Marrakech with the confidence that we have shifted from 'promise and commitment to one of action and achievements.'

I thank you, Mr. President.