Statement by Fred Mitchell MP
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Mr. Chairman,

I have travelled a long way away from The Bahamas to come here to my ancestral continent in this beautiful city of Marrakesh. Most people in The Bahamas have no idea why I am here and if you ask them they probably will show a mild and fleeting interest, and ask what about jobs, healthcare, food and the various necessities of life. .

At each step of the journey, I have tried to make the case for The Bahamas and why climate change is not an esoteric matter but an existential one. In doing so, I adopt the words of our Prime Minister that with 80 per cent of our land within five feet or 3 metres of the sea, the sea level rise threatens our every existence.

Our leaders have no choice but to make the case for The Bahamas that we must all stick by the Paris Agreement as the best hope of saving The Bahamas from the coming flood, even in the face of indifference by our own population.

The Bahamas has a small population. Our economy is small. Our intellectual postulations mean nothing to the world. More often than not, the moral case that we make falls on deaf ears. However, when your voice is all you have then your voice must make the difference.

We thought that we had won the moral case last year but now we hear from one of the developed world's highest public officials that this conference, the agreements we forged last year made us co-conspirators to an elaborate hoax and that climate change is not in fact real.

I hear the climate change sceptics now placed at official levels in the world but I also hear the screams of a little girl from a video taken during Hurricane Matthew in Nassau last month as the water rushed into her home and her parents tried to lift her into the ceiling. "I don't want to die; I don't want to die," she said.

In his age Galileo told the people of his age that it was a scientific fact that the earth revolved around the sun. No it does not said the religious leaders of his day. They threatened him with execution if he did not recant his heresy. He did and ended up spending the rest of his life under house arrest for telling the scientific truth.
Some centuries later, during the Papacy of John Paul II the church apologised to the family of Galileo for the

wrong which was done to him. Unfortunately that did not help Mr. Galileo who had long since left this mortal coil and could not hear the apology or benefit from the change of heart.

Similarly then in this age those who now tell us the scientists are wrong, there will be no comfort in 2050 if the scientists are proven right. It will be too late for the sceptics to say sorry.

Paris was the deal and a deal is a deal.

This means the commitments to the Green Climate Fund should be honoured. It means also that GDP per capita must not be used to eliminate The Bahamas for consideration for development assistance. The Executive Secretariat must provide the funding for small-island developing states to get to these meetings, and not be consumed by forensic examinations of eligibility based on that faulty determinant GDP per capita. We must also discard esoteric arguments about whether it's mitigation or adaptation, when they are simply different sides of the same coin.

As I looked into the young faces of the C V Bethel High School in Nassau, they told me they would be 50 years old 2050. I told them they may be the leaders of the

country who make the decision to move our population elsewhere.

On behalf of those children of C V Bethel and the Doris Johnson High School in my Fox Hill constituency and all the little ones in The Bahamas, I urge us all to stick to these commitments in Paris and do what is right.

I thank you.

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