Statement

By

Hon. Dr. Ralph E. Gonsalves

Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

At the

High-Level Segment of the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2016

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Your Majesty, Distinguished Heads of State and Government, Delegates!

First permit me to thank His Majesty the King, of the Kingdom of Morocco, for his kindness and the warmth of the reception he has given to us. Thanks to the Government and People of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Thus far, Mr. Chairman, we have been privileged to listen to informed and compelling speeches on the ravages of man-made climate change and strategic corrective responses. I adopt as my own all which has been said in these respects. I therefore do not intend to repeat what I agree upon, but I shall emphasise a few specific matters.

As I welcome the entry into force of the Paris Agreement, the reality in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, a Small Island Developing State, is that between 2010 and today, loss and damage from natural disasters amounts to some 40% of our country's GDP. One disaster, a tropical trough, on Christmas Eve 2013, accounted for loss and damage estimated at 17% of GDP. Indeed, in recent years, we have been suffering from highly abnormal torrential rains and consequential landslides. Last week there was another such extreme weather event

causing immense damage and loss of life. The poor are the most adversely affected.

This year, one-third of our total Capital Budget has been directed towards the strengthening of our country's resilience to natural disasters. This is separate from additional monies spent on loss and damage as a result of climate change. The allocation of substantial resources to climate resilience adds hugely to our country's debilitating public debt.

I echo the call of other developing country parties to quadruple, at least, adaptation finance mobilized through public interventions.

On access to finance: First, the mobilization of funds is a precondition to access. US$100 billion per year by 2020 is just a floor, which we are yet to reach. 100 billion dollars is woefully inadequate. We need to start planning our 2025 goal and ratchet up support for SIDS and other particularly vulnerable countries. Also, I call again for simplified access to the climate funds, as promised.

The per capita efforts of island states towards the global goal of emissions reduction need to be recognized and matched by developed countries. After all, it is developed country parties

that have agreed to take the lead in climate change mitigation. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, by the end of 2019, 80% of our electricity generation will be by renewable energy. Meanwhile energy efficiency measures continue apace, but far more financial support is required.

I would like to emphasize that these issues must be addressed not just at the political level, but also at the technical level. Political will is a necessary ingredient but these words must be manifested in deeds and in the technical decisions under the various bodies including the CMA, CMP, COP and subsidiary bodies.

The political document coming out of Marrakech should be focused on action, support and implementation of the Paris Agreement.

For all states globally especially small island developing states, we have no option but to remain focused to address concretely, and urgently, man-made climate change despite occasional dissonance and set-backs arising from certain quarters.

By 2050, Mother Earth is expected to contain in excess of 10 billion people, up from about 8 billion today. We are each other’s neighbors in this globalized world. Thus all peoples and

governments have an obligation to act responsibly to protect the global commons and our common humanity. There is really no other option for survival and sustainable development. This is a matter of existential consequence to humanity.

Thank you!