

REPUBLIC



OF THE GAMBIA

STATEMENT

BY

**HONOURABLE LAMIN B. DIBBA
THE GAMBIA'S MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE
CHANGE & NATURAL RESOURCES**

AT THE

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

OF THE

**TWENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE
PARTIES OF THE UNFCCC (COP 23),**

**6th TO 17th NOVEMBER 2017
BONN, GERMANY**

Mr. President

Excellencies

Honourable Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The delegation of The Gambia sincerely thanks the Government and people of Fiji for organizing this Conference and, in the same vein, thanks the people and Government of Germany for hosting this Conference. My delegation also appreciates the warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to it and all the facilities put at the disposal of the Gambian Delegation by the Government and people of Germany.

Mr. President

Excellencies

Honourable Ministers,

COP21 in Paris captured the global enthusiasm and the momentum of 197 Parties reaching a new, legally-binding climate change agreement. The Paris Agreement is a major milestone in the history of the international climate change negotiations. Its primary objective is to keep average global temperature rise to below 2⁰C and requires further efforts to limit temperature rise to 1.5⁰C. In Marrakech at COP22, this momentum continued with the Paris Agreement entering into force well ahead of schedule.

Mr. President

Excellencies

Honourable Ministers,

My country, The Gambia, and the other vulnerable communities that belong to the Least Developed Countries expect the momentum of the Paris Agreement to continue here at COP23.

We noted with serious concern that the adverse impacts of climate change continue to worsen. This decade and the last four years in particular have been the hottest in recorded history. In The Gambia, we experienced this year the driest September and the warmest October for decades.

This year, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean have experienced severe droughts and unprecedented rainfalls, storms and flooding which resulted in great loss of life and tens of billions of dollars in damages to economies and infrastructure. As global temperatures continue to rise on annual basis, storms like Harvey, Irma and Maria will become increasingly commonplace and we will all experience the devastation of extreme events exacerbated by climate change.

The urgent need for action on climate change has never been clearer.

Mr. President

Excellencies

Honourable Ministers,

Any negation or back-sliding in the global efforts on climate action will jeopardize the economic development of my country and the wellbeing of her people. It will also jeopardize the other vulnerable communities, of nearly one billion people living in the Least Developed Countries. The majority of our economies are climate sensitive and hence highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and variability.

One thing is now distinctly clear; global efforts are required now more than ever before with regard to increasing ambition in economy-wide reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, accelerated financial, capacity building and technological support are urgently needed for developing countries, and in particular, the Least Developed Countries, to enhance their mitigation actions and adaptation efforts.

Mr. President

Excellencies

Honourable Ministers,

Allow me to speak a bit more about my country, The Gambia. My country is among the smallest countries in Africa. The Gambia's economy is highly dependent on rain-fed agriculture, which is highly climate sensitive. About two-thirds of our Capital city, Banjul is less than half a meter above sea level. The Gambia is extremely vulnerable to sea level rise caused by climate variability and change. The projections are clear on what will happen to my country with regard to sustainable food security and community livelihoods if

global temperatures continue to rise.

Mr. President

Excellencies

Honourable Ministers,

The Gambia contributes about 0.01% to total greenhouse gas emission concentrations in the atmosphere. However, the impacts of climate change on my country do not correspond to our contribution to the problem. In spite of this, we have tasked ourselves through our Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions from key sectors of the economy. We plan a 44.4% reduction by 2025 and 45.4% reduction by 2030 with domestic and international support.

The Gambia is developing a Low Emission Climate Development Strategy to facilitate the achievement of this task. Furthermore, efforts are underway to integrate and mainstream climate change considerations into policies and strategic plans at national and subnational levels.

Mr. President

Excellencies

Honourable Ministers,

The Gambian delegation is looking forward to concrete and fruitful outcomes from our discussions here in Bonn. These outcomes should ensure that the rulebook of the Paris Agreement is finalised by 2018.

The outcomes of COP23 should also signal that all developed countries will honor their commitments under the Convention as well as the Paris Agreement, in terms of support for adaptation funding and the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions – both their own and those of developing countries. In this regard, The Gambia welcomes the Government of Germany’s recent pledge of \$50 million dollars to the Adaptation Fund.

My country also welcomes the climate leadership displayed by developing countries. For example, the three Commissions established by the African Head of State Summit in Marrakech on the margins of COP22; namely the Commission on Climate in the Sahel, the Commission for the Congo Basin, and the Commission on the Island States. We also welcome the Least Developed Countries’ Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiative for Sustainable Development launched at COP22 in Marrakech Morocco.

Mr. President

Excellencies

Honourable Ministers,

The Gambian delegation to COP23 trusts that our concern for the world’s most vulnerable communities will be addressed through fair and equitable discussions here in Bonn. These discussions must reflect the urgency of the challenge we all face.

On that note Mr. President, Excellencies, Honourable Ministers, distinguished Delegates, I thank you for your kind attention.