

**Statement by  
Senator The Hon. Maxine McClean  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados  
To the High-Level Segment of the  
18<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change  
UNFCCC COP 18 / CMP 8  
Doha, Qatar, 4 - 7 December 2012**

Mr. President,

At the outset let me express the Government of Barbados' appreciation to the Government and people of the State of Qatar for their warm and generous hospitality in welcoming us to the beautiful city of Doha. Barbados wishes to associate itself with the statements made by the Republic of Nauru on behalf of the AOSIS and Algeria on behalf of the G77 and China.

Mr. President,

The great American civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther once said and I quote "The time is always right to do what's right" end of quote. As we reflect on our collective response to the global climate crisis over the past two decades, can we honestly say that we have done what's right? Has our response been commensurate with the gravity and seriousness of the problem, and are we bequeathing to future generations a safe and prosperous future?

While some progress has been made, we are no way near where we need to be. All major reports on the state of the world's climate system paint an alarming picture, even as they point to the gross inadequacy of our response. In every corner of the globe, the evidence of a changing climate is right before us. In all our countries, we are experiencing more intense, costlier and deadlier climate related extreme weather events. No country is immune and no community will be left untouched by the ravages of climate change.

If we are to do what is right, we cannot continue on our current path. The time for procrastination is over. We cannot afford the luxury of further denial. We must respond with ambition and at a pace that is now beyond urgent. The time for incremental and piecemeal solutions is long past.

Dr. King also famously said that "There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right." For the small island developing states that moment has arrived.

Given that our very survival and viability as sovereign states are at stake, how then can SIDS countries be expected to agree to a lowest common denominator outcome? The positions that we have taken at this and previous meetings have made many uncomfortable. However, they are grounded in the science based seriousness that has been fully declared and accepted, the urgency of action which must underpin our work in this Convention, and the broader global response to climate change.

It is therefore not surprising

- that we have called for more ambitious emission reduction commitments than that which are on offer by all developed countries including those undertaking a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol;

- that we have called for real and tangible outcomes under the Durban Platform’s work plan on enhancing mitigation ambition to ensure we are on track to achieve the well below 2 degrees goal;
- that we have joined with other developing countries in seeking greater clarity on the delivery of scaled up finance after the end of the Fast Start finance period in three weeks;
- that we’ve secured the support of the entire developing world in calling for an international institutional anchor to address loss and damage from climate change.

We make no apologies for these positions.

Failure to address each of these important issues before this meeting will lead to serious existential consequences for SIDS and other vulnerable communities around the world. We are not fully convinced that our negotiating partners fully understand what they are requesting of us when they seek our acquiescence to their demands. We too have a responsibility to protect and safeguard our people. Based on estimates from the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center, locking in low ambition on mitigation, finance and adaptation here in Doha would entail potential economic losses around 14% of GDP annually for Caribbean SIDS by 2025, and 39% of GDP by 2050. We are not prepared to accept this fate.

Mr. President,

It is therefore critical that we all play our part in addressing our contribution to, and combating the effects of climate change. Barbados is firmly committed to enhancing our energy efficiency and pursuing alternative energy sources such as wind and solar, as a means of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, as well as safeguarding our citizens from the ravages of climate change, particularly in relation to sea-level rise.

In May this year, the Government of Barbados in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hosted a High-Level Conference on “Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in SIDS.” That conference adopted the Barbados Declaration which contained inscriptions from 22 SIDS on a range of voluntary commitments and actions aimed at charting a low carbon development pathway. We urge our development partners to support the efforts of SIDS in implementing these commitments.

Mr. President,

Time is not on our side. The science is telling us that we can still achieve the 1.5 or 2 degree goals which we agreed to last year. As Leaders and Ministers our responsibility is to serve the interests of our peoples by leading. I believe that moving forward, greater Ministerial oversight of this process is required to provide political impetus and guidance as we wrestle with the difficult issues before us. We also need to open this process even more to civil society and the public, so that they might better understand the implications of the decisions we are making on their behalf.

Mr. President,

Barbados remains confident that Doha will be a success if we all reflect on and soberly consider the words of Dr. King as we seek concessions from others. “The time is always right to do what’s right”. I thank you.