

Statement by Dr Kenrick Leslie, Executive Director

Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre

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COP 16

Cancun, Mexico

Madam President, on behalf of the people of the member States of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, I congratulate you on your election as the President of the 16th Session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 6th Session of the Conference of the Parties acting as the Meeting of the Parties of Kyoto Protocol. We also wish to thank you and the people of Mexico for providing such excellent arrangements and facilities.

Madam President, the people of Cancun and the entire Yucatan Peninsula besides enjoying the bounty of the Caribbean also share the same vulnerabilities as our people in the Caribbean to the adverse impacts of climate change ... sea level rise resulting in coastal erosion, inundation and salt water intrusion, coral bleaching and extreme weather events such as floods, droughts and more intense hurricanes. These are not projections or predictions; these

events are already occurring, and are imposing many challenges for the sustainable development of the region.

With these threats looming over us, CARICOM is seeking the highest level of ambition from these negotiations. An agreement, which will result in the peaking of global concentrations of greenhouse gases by 2015 and a decline to 350 parts per million to give the atmosphere an even chance to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre industrial levels.

That is why we reiterate the call of the Small Island Developing States for a compilation of the emerging science on the impacts of climate change since the publication of the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Since 2007, there has been a wealth of new information. Our research in the Caribbean shows that with a further rise of one metre in the sea level accompanied with a storm surge, 60% of our coastal infrastructure will be inundated. Combined with a 1.5 degree Celsius rise in temperature, our region will experience an 85% reduction in our gross domestic product. Though we continue to pursue adaptation options, such options are both expensive and have a finite limit.

Madam President, the science tells us what we have to do. In 1997 we agreed on a landmark agreement, the Kyoto Protocol, which established a legally binding agreement for developed countries to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases by 5.2% below their 1990 levels. The mechanisms to achieve those targets have been tested. They can work. We know that those targets are woefully inadequate. Much more must be done and we all have to do our share. That is why as part of the region's regional climate change strategy, the Caribbean Community will undertake a low carbon development strategy. Even though we produce less than 1% of the global greenhouse gas emissions, we recognize that we must do our part. However, there is only so much that we can do. The larger emitting countries can do much more.

This challenge is not easy. It will require concerted global action to achieve the objectives required. This will require leadership, responsibility, and accountability. The measure of leadership is the magnitude of the challenge they confront. This produces heroes and heroines. Are they in Cancun?

Madam President, from the beginning of the year you have been working to have some tangible results in Cancun. There are only a few hours remaining. We

urge the parties to acknowledge the problem, avoid the blame game and work towards a solution that will provide our people a fighting chance for survival.

I thank you for this opportunity to make this statement on behalf of the member states of the Caribbean Community Climate change Centre.