

**STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA
AT THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE
SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF
THE PARTIES (COP17) OF THE UNITED NATIONS
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
AND THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF
THE PARTIES SERVING AS THE MEETING OF THE
PARTIES OF THE KYOTO PROTOCOL (COP17 / CMP 7)**

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA , 7th DECEMBER, 2011

**Presented by
H.E. DR. KENNETH DARROUX**

**MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL
RESOURCES, PHYSICAL PLANNING AND FISHERIES**

Madame President,

Heads of States and Governments, Ministers, Excellencies

I am very honoured and pleased for the opportunity afforded to my delegation to address this High Level Segment of the 17th Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 7th Session of the Conference of Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties of the Kyoto Protocol.

Allow me Madame Chair, to convey the gratitude of my delegation to the government and people of South Africa for the warm African hospitality that has been extended to us, as well as to the Secretariat for the excellent arrangements for this meeting in this scenic Port City of Durban.

I also wish to congratulate you Madame President, on your appointment as President to the COP, and look forward to your wise and diligent leadership throughout the coming year.

Madame President,

We support the statements made by Argentina on behalf of G77 and China, and by Grenada on behalf of the Alliance of Small Islands States.

Madame President,

Climate change is real and gone are the days when climate change was thought to be a figment of the imagination of a few mad scientists and environmental extremists. We heard earlier from Heads of States and Governments and also Ministers.... of the ravages of the adverse effects of Climate Change in their respective countries.

We also heard statements by the United Nations Secretary General, Mr Bank ki Moon, as he spoke about islands disappearing in the Pacific and of water in the Poles where once existed vast expanses

of ice. We have heard of floods, droughts and the ensuing effects on the very livelihood of vulnerable populations and the very threat to life itself.

And Madam President, the Caribbean is no exception. Located in the hurricane path where every year we are threatened by hurricanes originating in the Atlantic Ocean..... in recent years we have seen the intensifications and unpredictability of these events. And even as I speak, Madam President, my island country is under Flash Flood warning....at a time of the year which traditionally marks the onset of the dry season.....and not only that, but an event almost unheard of before in Dominica, given its rugged terrain.

Madam President, this year alone, my Government has had to respond to flooding and landslides brought upon by unseasonal intense rainfall events – causing in excess of US\$100 million in damage. This constitutes in excess of 10% of Dominica's Gross Domestic Product in a year when we have been fortunate enough not to have been struck by any Hurricane. Last year, Dominica suffered its most severe drought in recent times, followed by a late Hurricane. These events combined, present a severe shock to the farming community of Dominica which currently employs 25% of the labour force, generating on average 15% of our Gross Domestic product. And this does not include ongoing works such as the construction of sea defense walls in response to coastal degradation brought about by rising sea levels which threaten coastal settlements and other infrastructure.

Madam President,

Climate change and climate variability are a reality in Dominica and the wider Caribbean by extension..... and over the past decade small island developing states have been on the Front Line of the devastating effects of climate change – witnessing severe floods, landslides, increased intensity of hurricanes, loss of crops and fishery resources – affecting food security, human health, livelihoods, the economy and our ability to achieve our sustainable development aspirations.....Our Governments have been grappling to manage this risk with the very limited resources that are at our disposal and my government is reminded of our vulnerability to climate change on a regular basis – having to stretch our limited financial resources in order to address the impacts of unseasonable severe weather events. It is a sad reality that Dominica, like many other small island developing States, has to devote an ever increasing portion of its national budget to restoration and clean up after such storms. Continuous damage to critical infrastructure from climate change continues to affect our competitiveness, our economy and undermines my government's commitments to provide for the basic needs of our people.

Madame President,

Dominica has been fortunate in attracting the help and support from the international community and regional partners in our attempts to manage the very real risks presented by climate change. In recent years, Dominica has been provided support from the Global Environment Facility to undertake enabling activities that have established the foundation upon which we can begin to manage climate change risks.

Currently, Dominica is one of the few vulnerable countries that are receiving support under the Pilot Program on Climate Resilience funded by the Climate Investment Funds. We are in the final stages of developing Dominica's *Strategic Program for Climate*

Resilience which will support our transformation to a climate resilient low carbon development path.

Madame President,

Our work to build a climate resilient and low carbon Dominica have highlighted the fact that funds well in excess of those provided under the Climate Investment Funds and current financing mechanisms under the Convention are required if my country is to address climate change in a meaningful manner. Dominica, the Nature Island of the Caribbean with in excess of 60% forest cover, has the potential to continue to be one of the few carbon neutral countries in the world if we can harness our tremendous geothermal potential.....and even as we speak, work has just begun on test drilling to explore our geothermal resource which should go a long way into providing our country and potentially nearby island states with a cheaper, cleaner form of energy, thus reducing the dependence on fossil fuels and hence, reducing emissions.

Our enviable conservation management program has ideally positioned us to be able to explore the possibilities of opportunities and potential benefits which exist under the REDD PLUS program. However, we require access to technical and financial resources to make this a reality.....and we are committed in Durban to fulfill the mandate of decision 1/CP.16 and agree on financing options for the full implementation of REDD+ results-based actions. Madam President we agree with other Parties that financial resources for REDD+ should come from fund based sources and from a flexible combination of fund based and market based sources.

Madame President,

It is our desire that in Durban we achieve the following :

- A Second Commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol.
- A Mandate for a legally binding instrument under Convention.
- Increases in mitigation ambition to bring greenhouse gases in line with the under 2C/1.5 pathways.
- A robust process for the conduct of the Review of the Long Term Global Goal.
- Strengthening of the Financial Architecture and
- Implementation of the institutional decisions agreed to at Cancun.

Madame President,

Despite our many challenges, Dominica and other Small Island Developing States continue to demonstrate strong leadership in the area of climate change at the domestic, regional and international levels. However, it is regrettable that to date no consensus has been reached on the best way to deal with what we consider a clear and present danger to our planet and even as we speak, as we procrastinate over minor issues, whilst the adverse effects of climate change continue to threaten our very existence.

So Madame President,

Another year has come and gone since Cancun and we here we are gathered here in Durban, yet again, to discuss climate change and whilst there was considerable uncertainty 20 years ago, today there

is considerable body of scientific knowledge highlighting the urgent nature of the problem.....and I hate to sound like the prophet of doom, but if urgent action is not taken, the world as we know it will cease to exist.....but I have hope Madam President, and the presence of so many here in Durban speaks volumes.....governments, civil society, religious leaders, private sector among others.....keeps the hope alive that we are ready to take on the challenge.....Madam President, ladies and gentlemen.....the fate of Mother Earth is in our hands and the decisions we make here will decide whether our children remember us as conscientious heroes who did all we could to save her OR as the those who convened, year after year, said so much.....promised so much..... but did nothing while she perished.

I thank you.