



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

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**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Eden
Charles
Permanent Mission of Trinidad and
Tobago to the United Nations**

**At the High Level Segment of the United
Nations Framework Convention on
Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference
of Parties 21 (COP 21)**

Paris, France

Tuesday 08th December 2015

Mr. President, Trinidad and Tobago joins with others in expressing condolences to the Government and people of France for the recent terrorist attacks. We also wish to stress our abhorrence of these cowardly and criminal acts perpetrated without regard for human dignity and the sanctity of human life. We applaud the French government and people for their steadfast resolve and determination during this time and congratulate you for the arrangements made for this Conference.

Trinidad and Tobago stands in solidarity with France, and with all of the peoples of the world negatively impacted by the scourge of terrorism. It is clear to us that terrorism and the threat of climate change share many common widespread devastating characteristics which serve to underscore the fact that they both require a coordinated global response.

Addressing the challenge of climate change will require a committed and ambitious global effort over the remainder of this century. While we do not expect the outcome of this COP to deliver a ‘one-shot’ solution to the climate change challenge, we do expect COP 21 to set us on a path toward urgent and effective international cooperation on climate change. It is also clear, that this new agreement must put us in a position to regularly scale up our efforts over time. This must happen every five years in keeping with the ever-increasing speed of technological innovation. We advance that this is the only way we will be able to achieve the level of global action required before it is too late.

The Paris agreement must ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are fully acknowledged and addressed. It must carry forward the spirit of the new global sustainable development agenda, agreed in September this year by our leaders, and ensure that no one is left behind. Some basic elements are required to ensure that the agreement will be effective. A common commitment to implement is the basis for trust and cooperation.

There must be a common framework for regular reporting and tracking so that we know where we are headed; in addition to processes for reviewing and enhancing commitments, as well as for ensuring accountability and compliance. These basic elements must be supported by climate finance to support adaptation efforts in developing countries and unlock their mitigation potential through the transfer of green technologies and capacity building support.

Mr President, as a small island developing state, Trinidad and Tobago is among those countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The impacts of climate change in Trinidad and Tobago will intensify stresses on the supply of fresh water and wreak havoc on our prospects for achieving food security through enhanced agricultural production. Our vulnerable ecosystems have already begun to bear the brunt of ocean acidification and sea level rise. We are on the frontlines of experiencing dangerous climate impacts that, if left unchecked, will only intensify over time.

Trinidad and Tobago relies heavily on fossil fuels for its economic viability, however, our contribution to the problem of climate change remains negligible. Nevertheless, we have acknowledged the need to play our part in the fight against climate change in order to safeguard the future of our people. Consequently, Trinidad and Tobago has submitted its intended nationally determined contribution (iNDC), which it expects to become a commitment in the context of the agreement to be reached at this Conference. We reaffirm our commitment to design and implement the relevant policies, plans and legislation in order to achieve our iNDC. This will be done in the context of national sustainable development plans and strategies geared toward economic diversification, social inclusion and the eradication of poverty.

Mr President, Trinidad and Tobago has also joined with 115 other States in the call for the Paris agreement to establish a long-term temperature goal that would limit the increase in average global temperatures to below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial

levels. This is the only achievable temperature limit that will safeguard vulnerable ecosystems within Small Island Developing States like Trinidad and Tobago, and allow for the possibility of adaptation where none would exist under higher levels of warming. Even in this most optimistic scenario, it is certain that Small Island Developing States will continue to lose coastline to sea level rise as well as suffer loss and damage such as, infrastructure to increasingly intense natural disasters. It is for these reasons that a critical element of the Paris agreement must be the establishment of arrangements to address loss and damage. The credibility of our deliberations relies on this.

Mr. President the outcome of this conference can either be our greatest triumph in the fight against climate change, or, our most glaring defeat. Now is not the time for further delay. Now is the time for delivery. Now is the time for action on climate change. We must not miss this opportunity to secure the survival of future generations of humankind.