

# **BELIZE**



**STATEMENT BY  
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**MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE OF THE  
PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON  
CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC COP 19)**

**AND**

**THE 9<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES SERVING  
AS THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL  
(CMP 9)**

**20<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2013**

**WARSAW, POLAND**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Mr. President.

Your Excellency Minister Marcin Korolec.

Allow me to convey greetings on behalf of the Government and People of Belize. I also extend my delegation's appreciation to the Government and People of Poland and the City of Warsaw for being gracious hosts,

Belize also joins other nations in expressing its profound sympathies to the people of the Philippines who have been affected by the Typhoon Haiyan and the people of Somalia who were recently ravaged by Tropical Cyclone 3A.

Mr. President, we see this COP as a vital step on the road to success to a global climate regime in 2015.

The slogan "I care", a slogan that is most appropriate for this occasion could easily be "We care". Nothing exemplifies this fact more than the commitment we as Governments made to address the issue of climate change when we ratified the Convention in 1994. In 2009, in Copenhagen, we agreed to limit warming to below 2 degrees Celsius and to scale up finance. In Durban, we agreed to conclude a universal global climate treaty by 2015.

Mr President, these are international, binding legal obligations. As we convene in Warsaw we must make significant progress on a number of critical and salient issues.

Science is important to our work. To the extent that science continues to improve and to sharpen our understanding of what we have done to our climate system, it must also be a part of our solution. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group One findings have reinforced the urgency of our work here in Warsaw.

On finance, Governments need to provide clarity on scaling up the mobilisation of 100 billion USD per year by 2020 to assist developing countries in both adaptation and mitigation. Since 2012, we have had no assurance that the much touted Copenhagen 100bn commitment will be fulfilled. We have instead heard excuses of why it cannot be reached. Shockingly, that Copenhagen commitment was not imposed upon any country! It was undertaken as a sovereign decision of those who subscribe to Copenhagen.

Mr. President, governments must also take steps to address loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change from extreme and slow-onset events. This is extremely important for our region, as climate change inflicts loss and damage on our economies, livelihoods, coastal infrastructure, ecosystems, food and water supplies.

It is also critical that Governments continue to advance the work under the Durban Platform. The details of the new global agreement under the Durban Platform need to be worked out in Warsaw.

We join with AOSIS and urge all countries to raise ambition of targets and actions in 2014, including new pledges from Governments who have not done so. We all need to close the ambition gap if we want to avoid the highest cost of adaptation.

Mr. President, ninety-five percent of Belize's emissions are from the land use and forestry sectors. REDD+ must be a part of any workable climate change solution. We need to consider all options to limit warming to well below 2 or 1.5 degree Celsius. A mechanism for the full implementation of REDD+ activities as identified in paragraph 70 of decision 1/CP.16 of the Cancun Agreements should be fully included in the new agreement and be supported with adequate, additional and predictable finance coming from a wide variety of sources.

Mr. President, Belize's Horizon 2030 Plan has set the framework for future development and envisions a modern, green and sustainable economy. Although Belize is amongst the lowest emitters of greenhouse gases, we have acted domestically and are at the forefront of confronting climate change. **We were never one to make excuses.**

Mr. President, Belize is one of the leaders in the region in having a 63% renewable energy mix with 96% of our domestic energy production coming from renewable energy sources. Recently, the Government of Belize has approved a National Energy Policy Framework which outlines Belize's path to greater energy efficiency, sustainability and resilience over the next 30 years.

Mr. President,

Adaptation is now an imperative for our sustainability. Belize is a low lying coastal state with a fringe of islands and cays extremely vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and climate variability. The livelihoods of our people are persistently threatened by floods that destroy homes, roads and bridges while leaving communities isolated. Recurrent droughts have affected agriculture and our electricity sectors. During the past decade, Belize has been severely affected by six major hurricanes leaving many homeless in already impoverished areas, and destroying critical transport and energy infrastructure. These storms wreaked havoc in our agriculture and forest sectors resulting in millions of dollars in loss and damage.

Mr. President, Belize is entrusted with the largest Barrier Reef System in the Northern Hemisphere, a system that includes three of the four atolls in the Caribbean and over a thousand cays. It is estimated that the reef systems provide \$395 - \$559 million US dollars in goods and services. However, this World Heritage site is being threatened by higher sea temperatures and ocean acidification caused by increasing levels of carbon dioxide in the ocean.

Adaptation is costly for my country. Critical climate change financing is needed to move Belize towards a climate resilient and low carbon future of sustainable development.

The time for action is now! We must all do our part! However, we cannot do it alone and we cannot do it without significant financing, participation and cooperation from all stakeholders.

Mr. President,

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Governments of Japan, Australia and the European Union for their assistance in our Mitigation and Adaptation efforts.

We have also received assistance in various forms from the Republic of China on Taiwan and urge that it is time for Taiwan to be permitted to meaningfully participate in the Convention. No country should be excluded from offering a solution to climate change.

Finally, Mr. President, I want to give you my highest assurances that both the Government and people of Belize are committed to the principles of the Convention. We have been doing our part and pledge to continue our efforts. It is only through our collective efforts we can be assured of a habitable planet for ours and future generations.

Thank you,