



Monsieur le Président de la Conférence des Parties à la Convention,

Monsieur le Président de la République française,

Monsieur le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies,

Madame la Secrétaire exécutive,

Chers Collègues Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement,

Excellences, Mesdames et Messieurs les délégués et membres de la société civile,

Je viens parmi vous en tant que chef du Gouvernement du pays qui, en 1988, a introduit le thème des changements climatiques à l'Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies ; un pays qui, à la COP 21, soutient totalement la position de l'Union Européenne. Mais aujourd'hui je vous parle au nom des cinquante-trois Etats membres du Commonwealth qui viennent de conclure un Sommet hier à Malte. Nous y avons accueilli, dans le cadre d'une session sur l'Action Climatique, avec appréciation le Président de la République française – qui nous a montré son engagement dans la lutte climatique le jour même d'un deuil national, ainsi que le Secrétaire général des Nations Unies, Son Altesse Royale le Prince de Galles, et le Commissaire de l'Union Européenne responsable pour l'Environnement. Et nous y avons adopté une déclaration qui vous sera transmise.

Mr President,

The Commonwealth is an assembly of diversity - geographical, economic, social and cultural diversity. Building bridges across this diversity is a challenge. Yet diversity can also be an asset. Among us we have wealthy, major and emerging economies, as well as least developed countries; massive landmasses and small islands facing existential threats; very rich and very poor people. The fact that we represent such a wide range of national circumstances adds to our weight in expressing a collective view on climate change.

Vulnerability to climate change is a major concern for many of us. The vulnerability of a community on a low-lying coast springs easily to mind. We must also address – for example – the vulnerability of a poor rural community, affected by drought, desertification and shifting weather patterns, far away from the electricity grid. In fact, we must fight a war on two fronts: against poverty and for a safe climate.

On the climate front of this war, the aim is not just to reach agreement here on what governments undertake to do in the years and decades ahead. It is also to give a signal to the world beyond governments – to our citizens, to our corporate leaders, to technological innovators and to investors - a signal of the challenges and the opportunities of moving with determination towards a transformational climate-friendly future that spreads prosperity to all. I stress the opportunities, because for too long our negotiators have been stuck in their defensive trenches playing a zero-sum, burden-sharing game, rather than looking over the edge towards the smart, healthy and profitable opportunities that sustainable development offers.

This is the signal that COP 21 must give. It is this message that Commonwealth Leaders seek to convey in our statement on Climate Action adopted in Malta. Although one of us had reservations



on some elements, this remains, I believe, a statement that is worthy of the Commonwealth, a supportive message to all our fellow members of the climate change community and in particular to France.

The Commonwealth Leaders' statement unites us in pursuit of the goal of holding the increase global temperature below 2 or 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. To this end, it states a commitment to work towards an ambitious, equitable, inclusive, balanced, rules-based and durable outcome of COP 21 – one that includes a legally-binding agreement under the Convention in fulfilment of the Durban Platform mandate. We hope that such an outcome, according equal importance to mitigation and adaptation, will mobilise all Parties in its implementation and put the global community on track towards low-emission and climate-resilient societies and economies

In summary, the statement envisages that such an outcome will:

- stimulate the development, transfer and diffusion of technology and know-how, notably in the energy sector;
- signal clearly the need for deep cuts in emissions through mid-century and beyond, informed by the latest science, and encourage national measures to follow those pathways;
- support vulnerable states and communities in building their capacity for resilience and adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change, recognising climate-related loss and damage as an important issue to be addressed;
- encourage and mobilise finance for mitigation and adaptation from traditional and innovative sources, including transparent and accessible public finance from developed countries to help developing countries, with the option of complementary support by other countries and with an urgent focus on the most vulnerable countries and communities; and
- provide for a robust and facilitative system for transparency and accountability, reflecting national circumstances and capabilities, and for periodic reviews of collective progress with a view to increasing ambition over time.

Furthermore, the developed Commonwealth countries reaffirmed their commitment to play their part in meeting the US\$ 100 billion per annum target for climate finance by 2020.

Mr President,

Inspired by the “Commonwealth Charter”, our Member States urge practical and swift action by governments and all other stakeholders, public and private, to implement and reinforce the outcome of COP 21, especially in favour of climate vulnerable states and communities. In this spirit, we have launched the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub, the Commonwealth Green Finance Facility initiative, and the pioneering global Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network.

Finally, Mr President, I point out that Commonwealth Member States have tabled 50 intended Nationally-Determined Contributions (INDCs), whose mitigation components cover some 17 per cent of global emissions of greenhouse gases. The statement recognises that the aggregate of INDCs by the Convention Parties is an important advance over business as usual and that all Parties will need to build on their mitigation and adaptation efforts over time, with appropriate means of implementation, in order to keep our collective goals within reach.



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
AUBERGE DE CASTILLE, VALLETTA, MALTA

Consequently, it was declared in Malta that there will be “no backsliding” from these Commonwealth INDCs. Each of our contributions registered in connection with the entry into force of the expected “Paris Agreement” will be at least as ambitious as the corresponding intended contribution. This declaration is offered as a demonstration of commitment to leadership in the movement towards sustainable development in a safe climate, a movement that will require progressive increases in ambition as experience is gained in addressing the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Thank you.