



GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Statement by
The Honourable Gaston Browne
Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda
at
COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan on 13 November 2024

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Climate change is the single greatest existential threat of our time.

Global temperatures are racing past the 1.5-degree threshold; with each year setting new heat records.

For nations like Antigua and Barbuda, these are no longer warnings—they are devastating daily realities.

Every year of inaction compounds our vulnerability and deepens the injustice we endure. We cannot wait any longer for empty pledges to become meaningful action.

For decades, wealthy nations pledged \$100 billion annually to support vulnerable countries, yet these promises have largely gone unfulfilled.

Now, as we discuss a New Collective Quantified Goal, we again see proposals that complicate rather than commit.

Wealthy polluting countries are seeking to shift responsibility onto illusive private capital, instead of ensuring decisive government action to reduce and disincentivize emissions, by introducing a global carbon tax, to fund the clean energy revolution that is quintessential to saving our planet.

To those who bear the greatest responsibility for climate change I say: the time for moral responsibility is now.

The time for increased climate ambitions is now.

If promises of support remain unfulfilled, then justice must demand that those promises are enforced.

Today, we seek consensus on a clear, substantial climate finance target at COP29, with adequate funding to help us adapt and build resilience.

We are calling not for loans that deepen our debt burden but for direct investments, in the form of compensatory grants to build-back more resilient infrastructure that were damaged repeatedly by catastrophic climate events.

This Financing must be equitable, accessible, and debt-free if we are to achieve climate justice.

We cannot continue to hear the same promises as our islands suffer and descend into despair.

In the absence of real action from those most responsible for climate change, vulnerable nations are turning to international law.

That is why, with a favorable opinion from ITLOS affirming the duty of states to protect the marine environment, we will appear before the ICJ in December in solidarity with Vanuatu as champions of their case.

If voluntary pledges remain broken, then international law will be our pathway to justice.

This is no longer a choice—it is a necessity when commitments go unmet.

My small island state bears a disproportionate burden in this crisis.

Nonetheless, we are determined to utilize our limited resources to build resilience to climate extremities; for we are resolved to secure our nation and our future.

This is why Small Island Developing States adopted the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS “the ABAS” at the Fourth SIDS Conference in Antigua and Barbuda earlier this year.

We know that while the bell tolling warns us first, its sound echoes for all.

If vulnerable nations are abandoned today, tomorrow’s toll will be universal.

This COP29 must be a turning point where the world chooses justice over delay, responsible leadership over evasion, and decisive action over empty promises.

Mr. President, we urge that this be the year that promises are honoured - because time is running out, not only for small states, but for all of us.

Thank you.