

NATIONAL STATEMENT
BY
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PRIME MINISTER OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE
BAHAMAS,
TO THE WORLD LEADERS' SUMMIT
OF THE UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE
CHANGE CONFERENCE
COP 27
SHARM EL-SHEIKH, EGYPT

Tuesday 8th November 2022

Your Excellencies:

I live in the most beautiful country on earth.

But right now, even as I speak, Bahamians are mobilizing to prepare for the impact of yet another powerful storm.

So I come here with a simple request:

Let's get real.

Let's use this conference to confront the radical truth.

Big, ambitious goals are important - but not if we use lofty aspirations to obscure reality.

The goal to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, is on life support.

This is a hard truth, because now we know, that even the *best*-case scenarios will mean almost unimaginable upheaval and tragedy.

For those who say it's not the right time to adapt to this new reality – that the war, and the hangover from the pandemic, and the economic headwinds, make it too difficult a time --

Let's get real: it's only going to get more difficult.

We are entering a new climate era that will drive extreme geo-political and economic instability.

For those who believe joint declarations are sufficient progress – **let's get real:** statements without binding commitments or enforcement mechanisms, have been used again and again as a way to postpone real action.

Yes, the world's wealthiest carbon polluters should pay for the harm caused by their emissions.

But 'getting real' means understanding that it will be self-interest that drives decision-makers.

So, I'm not here to ask you to love the people of my country with the same passion as I do,

or even to consider future generations in your own country.

I'm asking: what is it worth to you, to prevent millions of climate refugees, from turning into tens of millions, and then hundreds of millions, putting pressure on borders, and security, and political systems across the world?

I'm not telling you to overhaul the World Bank for this new climate era because it is the right thing to do.

I'm telling you it's in your interest to address the systemic risk of climate change.

Multilateral banks must play a crucial role in scaling up financing options for real solutions.

I'm not here to tell the private sector to give up caring about profits.

I'm here to say, that in a world of profound instability, those profits are very much in danger.

So, we need to work together to transition the world to clean energy.

Let's get real about what's coming.

Let's get real about what we need to do next.

Most of us in The Bahamas are descended from people who were forcibly removed from

their homes, shackled in the bottom of boats,
and shipped across the Atlantic.

We are the children of the survivors of that
man-made tragedy.

We inherit their moral imperative.

We have a duty to fight for our survival, as
they fought so desperately for theirs.

So we are not waiting for the world to act.

Bahamian leadership and innovation can
contribute to meaningful solutions.

Our mangroves, seagrasses and salt marshes
are a critical carbon sink.

In my country, we passed pioneering legislation to manage Blue Carbon.

Other countries are already considering adopting our framework for trading carbon credits.

And just this past Sunday, we agreed in principle with the IMF, to partner together to determine how carbon credits can be used productively as a new asset class.

We are expanding the use of renewable energy.

Bahamian entrepreneurs are creating new materials to reduce carbon emissions.

Young Bahamians – some of whom travelled here with me -- are becoming climate activists.

And we just launched a Youth Guard, to train young Bahamians to help our communities prepare for and recover from hurricanes.

If you have smart climate solutions, consider partnering with us in The Bahamas.

Help us convert our front-line vulnerabilities into cutting-edge solutions for all!

Because we refuse to lose hope.

We will not give up.

We have no other choice.

The alternative compels us to present ourselves at your borders as refugees.

The alternative consigns us to a watery grave.

The alternative will erase us from history.

This is why we fight.

We will continue to lift up our heads toward the rising sun.

We will continue to march on.

We will continue to believe that a safer, better future is possible.

Because all our lives - ALL OUR LIVES -
depend on it!

END