

ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES (OECS) – STATEMENT AT THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT AT COP 24

The recently-released IPCC 1.5-degree Special Report, with all of its detail, did not provide an ‘aha!’ moment for us. Rather, it provided us with an ‘I-told-you-so’ moment, as it served to vindicate us —the proponents of 1.5 who had been calling for such a report for many years. Critically, the report tells us that at 1 degree, we are already experiencing severe climate impacts. Even at 1.5, regions like the Caribbean will experience irreversible impacts, but meeting the 1.5-degree target is still possible, if we act now!

For us, one of the few surprises has been the response by some who, despite, or perhaps because of, the chillingly blunt future presented in the special report in the absence of inadequate action, seem determined to play word games with the fate of the planet and of humanity.

There are some who appear bent on sweeping the Special Report under the carpet in the hope that if it is concealed, climate change, and their role in creating it, will go away forever. With this kind of stance, it is no surprise that, here in Katowice, there have been efforts to airbrush every reference to the 1.5 Report out the negotiating text.

In similar vein, some, instead of seeking to take responsibility and to ramp up ambition, are looking to “ramp down” and even to back-pedal on commitments made at COP21. For some, it appears that “loss and damage” is what they seek to inflict on the Paris Agreement.

Sadly, if we allow this attitude to prevail, we will all be on a runaway train, going downhill, bound for an abyss of destruction that is of our own making. Those who choose to do less because they think they can ride the tide of climate destruction will be in for a rude surprise, but it will also be at the expense of the most vulnerable.

The Government and People of Poland have kindly hosted us here in Katowice and would surely like this COP to be remembered for the right reasons. We should all want Katowice to go down in history as a city where we stood united against a common peril, looked it squarely in the eye and took bold and courageous action to fight it. Let us therefore cast narrow national interests aside and do what is right, for us, for our children and for the planet!