

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, friends,

I speak today on behalf of the people of Vanuatu—people whose daily reality reminds the world that climate change is not a distant threat, but a present crisis shaping our shores, our livelihoods, and our very existence.

At this pivotal COP30, gathered here in Belém, we reaffirm a truth that has guided global progress for decades: **multilateralism remains our strongest instrument for collective survival**. No nation—large or small—can confront the climate crisis alone. We need one another. We need cooperation that is principled, ambitious, and unwavering.

For Vanuatu, the if this is the COP of truth, then the truth is that we need to do everything possible to **keep global temperature rise to below 1.5°C**. It is not a preference; it is a lifeline. Every fraction of a degree beyond it erodes our lands, cultures, and future. We call on all Parties to hold fast to this limit—not as an aspirational target, but as a binding responsibility.

This responsibility has now been clarified at the highest level of international law. The International Court of Justice has affirmed that States have **legal obligations** to prevent harm to the climate system and to protect the rights of present and future generations. Climate action is not charity. It is a duty. And we urge all nations to act in accordance with this legal and moral imperative.

To achieve this, climate finance must be scaled up, predictable, and accessible. Small island developing states cannot be left navigating complex systems while facing existential threats. We need finance that reaches the frontlines, supports adaptation, addresses loss and damage, and allows us to build resilient, just, and sustainable economies.

As we move forward from the Global Stocktake, the needs of small islands must remain central. Ambition must increase in mitigation. Adaptation gaps must close. Support must align with best available science which is the IPCC, justice, and the lived realities of those most affected. The GST must be a roadmap to vibrant communities living with dignity, not merely a record of missed opportunities.

But let me be clear: **not all solutions are equal**. Pathways that deepen inequities, prolong fossil fuel dependence, or sacrifice vulnerable communities on the altar of convenience have no place in our collective future. Climate action must be just. It must be effective. And it must not create new problems in the name of solving old ones. We need to ambitiously address fossil fuel production, exports and subsidies. Fossil fuel industries should also provide the finance for the damages they have caused.

Vanuatu believes deeply in the power of collaboration—rooted in fairness, guided by science, and anchored in law. Together, we can still choose a path that protects lives, cultures, and ecosystems. But that choice must be made now, with courage and with conviction.

Let COP30, 10 years from what we achieved in Paris, be remembered as the moment we recommitted to multilateralism, honoured our obligations, and decided to build a future where all nations—not just the powerful or the fortunate—can thrive.

Vanuatu stands ready to work with all of you to deliver that future.

Thank you.