

**STATEMENT OF SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
AT THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE
29TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES OF THE UNITED
NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
(UNFCCC COP29)**

**DELIVERED BY
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BAKU OLYMPIC STADIUM, AZERBAIJAN ON 19TH NOVEMBER, 2024

Mr. President, Excellencies and Distinguished Colleagues,

Recognising our ecological fragility as a Small Island Developing State, St. Vincent and the Grenadines cannot afford to be a mere spectator on the important issue of climate change. It is against this backdrop that I stand before you with the available science and our very own real-life experiences of being on the frontline of the devastating impacts of climate change.

For Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reducing carbon emissions to 1.5° C is more than just a target. On the 1st July 2024, our multi-island State was ravaged by the passage of the category 4 Hurricane Beryl, leaving some of our islands unrecognisable with thousands of families homeless in the wake of its destruction. We thank those who supported and continue to support our recovery efforts. Today, as I deliver this statement, my people are experiencing the impacts of severe flooding affecting our island's infrastructure.

If we are to follow the science, the aggressive nature and unpredictability of present weather systems is nature's response to humanity's failure to act.

For SIDS, we simply do not have any more time for polite asks. We cannot continue to expend finite resources on a continuous recovery cycle, while chasing vague promises for minuscule and indifferent action.

M. President, as our nation actively undertakes recovery efforts, COP 29 flagged as the finance COP, has an even greater personal and national significance.

Amidst the colourful diplomatic language of some leaders on this platform, our climate negotiators are disgracefully being held in a metaphoric choke-hold as major historic, and contemporary carbon emitters bob and weave their way out of commitments to reduce carbon emissions and bail-out on climate finance pledges. This is a selfish and unwarranted assault on the 65 million people living in SIDS.

We need to ensure that at this COP the New Collective Quantified Goal will build upon previous climate finance targets.

Mr. President, the new goal must take into account and respond to the urgent needs and priorities of developing countries, it must address adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage, and there must be a recognition of the special circumstances of SIDS addressing efficaciously their unique social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities.

Collectively, we must find solutions to unlocking the ever-complicated maze of climate finances, with practical considerations for access and distribution while renewing the call for a restructure of the global financial architecture presently designed to keep SIDS in a vicious cycle of debt.

Our government, firmly advocates for effective multilateralism, and an international framework within which our development priorities can be

pursued. In this vein, we highlight that all countries, especially those most affected, such as Taiwan an active good neighbour in the global community, should have a seat at the negotiating table.

Mr. President, we need an unprecedented level of collective action. In the final days of this conference, we must not compromise ourselves out of a viable future.

Ambitious action is not a want, but an imperative as we keep our heads above the rising tide to safeguard lives and livelihoods. There is still some lingering hope in humanity's call to action. Despite the challenges, it can and must be done.

I thank you.