

**STATEMENT OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES AT  
THE UNFCCC COP28 HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT  
(28<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE OF PARTIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AT EXPO  
CITY, DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  
ON DECEMBER 2, 2023**

**BY  
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PRIME MINISTER OF ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

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**[FORMAL GREETINGS]**

At the outset, I affirm that I am here in solidarity with the government and people of the United Arab Emirates; in solidarity with the people of the State of Palestine, especially those who are currently suffering horrendously in Gaza; and in solidarity with humanity on the calamity of an unfolding man-made climate crisis. I raise a first pertinent observation: If the global community is doing little or nothing to stop the televised genocide taking place in Gaza before our very eyes, is it surprising that we are doing precious little to avert the less directly visible climate change?

Overwhelmingly, and correctly, the global community has the settled view that human beings, by their acts of commission and omission, have been causing, and are accelerating dangerously, a

“climate change crisis” which portends an enveloping global disaster for life, living, and production.

Essentially, human beings are sleep-walking into a disaster of historic proportions. Nothing that has been proposed so far at this Conference of Parties has risen to the level of the urgency and scale of the transformation required, nay, demanded, to avert the impending debacle for humanity. The leaders of the countries which are the major emitters of green-house gases know it; the profiteering corporate barons, globally, know it; the informed population of our planet know it; we in the Caribbean know it quite well because we feel it; the world’s poorest people who experience daily the consequences of calamitous climate change know it very well. Yet, we continue to tinker here and there with paltry initiatives and celebrate them, falsely, as epoch-making and transformative. We may fool ourselves; we cannot fool nature. Humanity is facing a metaphoric chasm, a sprawling divide between what is required and what is being timidly advanced; we cannot cross this chasm by baby steps; if we seek to do so, we would fall below, and beneath, the widening gorge.

Saving humanity from the disaster of man-made climate change is a great cause. But great causes have never been won by doubtful men and women. Centrally, the planet cannot survive beyond global warming in excess of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. On present course, humanity will exceed this target, soonest. We know the compelling answers to this existential challenge, but we recoil from embracing them and acting upon them.

As in any great cause, the answers or solutions revolve around four critical requisites: Nothing is possible without people; nothing is doable without high quality, strategic leadership; nothing is achievable without the mobilization of a sufficiency of resources; and nothing is sustainable without specially-crafted institutions to deliver the transformative results agreed upon.

We have not been involving the earth's people in an informed and structured manner as is necessary and desirable; the planet's leadership on this existential matter has been, by-and-large, very poor, and shows, currently, little sign of improving; the resources which are available among the rich countries and the rich people

of our planet have not been mobilized in any sufficiency for the tasks at hand; and the global institutions to address the haunting bundle of sustainable issues are in a ramshackle condition and there is currently very little likelihood of their efficacious reform to make them fit for purpose. Unless, we address collectively, and in solidarity, each of these considerations optimally, humanity, as we know it, is doomed. This is not the usual end-of-times doomsday scenario of inevitability grounded in religious prophesy.

In this great cause, it is necessary and desirable to apply the Aristotalitarian proposition: Equity among equals; proportionality among unequals. The rich and powerful countries have a huge obligation to right the historic and current wrongs; we, the metaphoric unwashed multitudes must, in solidarity, insist on that, and at the same time do our part responsibly, urgently.

Thank you.