

National Statement by Mr. Wavel John Charles Ramkalawan President of the Republic of Seychelles on the occasion of COP26/CMP16/CMA3.0 – World Leaders’ Summit (WLS), High- Level Segment: 1-2 November 2021 Glasgow, UK.

Mr President

We are honoured to be here today and join those who have already spoken before in thanking The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the city of Glasgow and its people for their warm hospitality and for the opportunity to address our generation’s most urgent crisis.

Our presence here today, despite the on-going COVID 19 pandemic, demonstrates how crucial climate change is on our Agenda. The lives that will be lost due to the adverse effects of climate change if we do not act now, will be much worse than the pandemic. Needless to say, our issues have been further compounded with the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like other Small Island Developing States, the Republic of Seychelles recognises that building resilience to climate change and committing to a low-emission development pathway provide a firm basis for continued growth and sustainable development. We view climate change as an increasingly dire emergency that challenges all aspects of our chances for future survival and undermines Seychelles’ efforts to fully achieve the sustainable development goals.

Nonetheless, Seychelles stands steadfast alongside our fellow SIDS in remaining politically, morally, and socially committed. Meaningful progress on climate action is urgently required, as highlighted by the IPCC and WMO recently to put us on a path to a 1.5°C future.

As small as our contributions are to the degradation of the planet, we are committed to further reducing them through our updated Nationally Determined Contribution or NDC because we feel it and we know it. Our issues have been further compounded by the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. President

The world must build a vision for a climate resilient future that puts adaptation and loss and damage at the centre of decision-making, and take immediate action now to protect people, the economy, and the environment. Seychelles acknowledges that adaptation challenges require inclusive and sensitive global action, and we share a collective ambition, in line with the SDGs, to achieve a global society in which no person, no country is left behind. It is imperative that we step up our efforts to meet these urgent challenges.

Mr. President

Seychelles, therefore, calls on industrialized countries to take the lead in stepping up and displaying the leadership they claim to stake to the level that the science tells us is required to keep 1.5 alive! Clinging to coal and failing to help us all accelerate the clean energy transition while parading as climate champions is nothing but bad faith.

We have in this COP the daunting task of concluding the Paris rulebook before we leave Glasgow. Countries need to rediscover the political courage they had in Paris in 2015 to complete the rulebook on time. We must build the vessels we need to carry us towards a low carbon and clean energy future.

It is now up to us leaders to fill these vessels with increased ambition on climate action to close the substantial gap between the commitments countries have put forward to reduce their emissions and the much higher level of ambition needed to meet the temperature limitation goals established in the Paris Agreement. We must pick up the pace of the negotiations significantly if the Paris Agreement implementation rules are to be finalised at this COP.

Mr. President

Substantial progress also has to be made on the critical issue of ramping up financial and capacity-building support to SIDS like Seychelles and other developing countries to accelerate the deployment of clean energy, nature-based and other climate solutions, and to better meet the worsening impacts of climate change; this must be a much higher priority going forward because the USD 100 billion per year in climate financing by 2020 as pledged is long overdue.

Mr. President

The science clearly indicates that now is the time for all leaders to walk the talk and immediately start implementing the Paris Agreement roadmap. The 2030 climate and energy package in Seychelles' NDC is, for an example, an opportunity for us to show leadership in adopting more ambitious targets for renewables and energy efficiency in coherence with the Paris Agreement. It is an opportunity to prove that SIDS are prepared to lead by example by scaling up their ambition at home.

Seychelles will protect at least 50% of our seagrass and mangrove ecosystems by 2025 and 100% by 2030 as nature-based blue carbon ocean climate action. We also intend to regulate coastal planning and infrastructure at the national and local level to prioritize "blue" nature-based solutions.

As you can see, Mr President, ambitious ocean action is a key priority for my government as a SIDS and a big ocean state as we look to address the climate and biodiversity crises together wherever we can while enhancing our Blue Economy.

Mr. President

We once again urge all governments - with the major emitters taking the lead in cutting emissions and the industrialised countries in providing the promised support to developing countries - to continue to step up to meet the ever-growing challenge of tackling climate change to the scale that the worsening crisis demands.

Allow me to say in closing, that the international community has shown in the way it tackled COVID-19 that it can act swiftly and decisively when it wants to. Climate change will be with us long after we have brought the pandemic under control and with far greater consequences.

So I challenge the world, Mr President, to respond as we did to COVID-19 and take climate action as if the futures of our countries and economies, and indeed our lives, depend on it, because they do.

I thank you for your attention

