



Keynote statement

By

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**“Adaptation cannot wait: a call for accelerated
resilience building during recovery efforts”**

at the UNFCCC June Momentum

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Virtual meeting by Microsoft Teams

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Madam Chair of the SBI,

Madam Moderator,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the organizers for the invitation to address this meeting of the June Momentum.

This initiative is essential to maintain traction for ambitious climate action in the midst of the massive disruption we are witnessing across the world.

Indeed, we have been struck by the most severe global health crisis - and the most acute resulting economic crisis - of our lifetime.

And against this backdrop, the global climate crisis continues to unfold in slow motion.

The onset of the hurricane season is a stark reminder of this, and while our ability to respond is hampered by the virus. The example of Cyclone Amphan on Bangladesh is a case in point, where the number of coronavirus cases is escalating sharply.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts have put in sharp relief the multiple vulnerabilities of the least developed countries, small island developing states and landlocked developed countries.

These nations have the most fragile health systems.

Their economies – often commodity- or tourism-dependent – have been severely impacted by declining demand, global shutdowns and the massive decline in international trade and transport.

Many were already highly indebted before the pandemic.

Declining tax revenues limit the fiscal space available for stimulus measures.

Scarce domestic resources are being diverted from national SDG implementation towards plans to address emergency needs.

The virus has also impacted on the process of accessing funds and implementing adaptation activities.

This must be reversed.

Global efforts at addressing the impacts of COVID-19 in the most vulnerable countries must be viewed through the lens of building climate change resilience.

For example, the FAO has highlighted the risk to food security and nutrition in the wake of the pandemic due to disruptions in supply chains, increases in food loss and waste, especially of perishables, as well as labour shortages due to restrictions. Country-level policy responses to face the crisis should factor in climate resilience considerations.

It is now more essential than ever to issue a clarion call for maintaining - and increasing - levels of ODA, and especially for adaptation to climate change.

The National Adaptation Plans, even pre-pandemic, serve as the central vehicle for adaptation planning and implementation of adaptation solutions.

The important work of their preparation and roll-out cannot be put on hold.

Instead, COVID-10 has highlighted the imperative for accelerated effort for supporting the LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs.

There is much that can be done, even in the midst of these multiple and overlapping crises.

The LDCs and SIDs have fundamental obstacles they must overcome in order to effectively formulate and implement their NAPs. These deficiencies will not go away, but run the risk of being compounded as countries prioritize recovery efforts.

To avoid this, national stimulus packages should, to the extent possible, seek simultaneously to build resilience.

The NAP offers an immediate opportunity for the inclusion of climate resilience considerations into COVID-19 recovery efforts.

We should find ways to advance and learn from innovative solutions we are currently practicing, such as advancing actions through virtual means.

The role is equally valid in countries efforts at resilient recovery from COVID19.

The UNFCCC Open NAP initiative could not have been more relevant at this time as it is grounded on the principle of crowd sourcing and collaboration, virtually, in supporting the LDCs formulate effective adaptation plans.

In addition to producing plans and submitting Adaptation Communications, including through NDCs later this year, there are several other important steps we can take.

We cannot afford to have the usual sequence of events where we spend several years doing new assessments, new planning documents, another few years to write proposals for implementation, then another year to once projects approved to arrange implementation modalities, then eventually implementation on the ground. COVID-19 has shown us the need and urgency in doing vertical integration.

In my capacity as member of the GCF SIDS evaluation advisory group, I have emphasized the need for shortening the number of years needed from project proposal to results.

I have also emphasized the limited capacity in SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs to prepare projects. The COVID pandemic has highlighted what we already knew – the urgency of strengthening national capacities, so we are not dependent on international consultants.

While the internet offers remote-working solutions and the means of streamlining our processes, we must make sure that we bridge the digital divide, and not allow it be compounded during the COVID pandemic.

Supporting countries will require innovating, not simply going back to business as usual.

Given the urgency, a different approach to providing support is needed.

I call on everyone, including the panel to offer the vulnerable countries hope through innovative solutions.

We cannot accept delayed delivery and the shifting of outputs.

We can do it together and work with all countries to make real progress. Let us agree on concrete targets and get to work.

Thank you.
