



MEDIA RELEASE

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CARICOM Crystallises its Priorities and Positions for COP 26

(City of Belmopan, Belize) Two weeks ahead of the twenty-sixth Conference of the Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), CARICOM peaked its Ministerial preparations for the global Summit last Friday. During a 3-hour virtual session, several Ministers of government, ambassadors, Heads of CARICOM agencies, climate negotiators, senior public officials, and other technical experts assembled for presentations and to dialogue on the key issues that the region will spotlight at the upcoming Glasgow Conference.

Addressing the meeting was Secretary General of the CARICOM Secretariat, Dr Carla Barnett, who described the last several months of preparation as a period “to crystallise the region's priorities and positions”.

Expressing warm thanks to the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) for their hard work in leading the region’s preparation to participate effectively in Glasgow, Dr Barnett stressed the importance of “collective action to support adaptation and mitigation at the national, regional and international levels. We have overwhelming scientific evidence, from various IPCC reports of the threat that uncontrolled temperature rise will have on SIDS”, she exclaimed. “We remain concerned about the level of ambition in submitted Nationally Determined Contributions. There is the urgent need to close the emissions gap to maintain global warming to well below 1.5 °C”.

COP26 is a politically significant moment for accelerating ambition. Professor Michael Taylor of the University of the West Indies (UWI), in his ‘*Countdown to Zero*’ presentation to the Ministers, elucidated that 1.5° does not represent a safe climate for the world or for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Quoting the IPCC Report which states that “global warming of 1.5° C and 2° C will be exceeded during the 21st Century unless deep reductions in CO₂ and other green house gases emissions occur in the coming decades”, Professor Taylor cautioned that “heading to 2°C is too much for SIDS. Even at 1.5°C, we are only guaranteed half a chance of a livable future.”

The outcomes from the November 1-12 COP26 can have profound impacts on our earth as we know it, and many view it as “the last best chance for political leaders to avert a climate catastrophe, which would be unavoidable if global warming exceeds 1.5°C”. It means “there must be zero

tolerance on the net zero emissions, if we want to realise the future we want”, Professor Taylor told the Meeting.

Echoing the sentiments of the University Professor was His Excellency Aubrey Webson, of Antigua and Barbuda who is the current chairperson of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). He emphasized that “vulnerable countries like AOSIS Members gave up liability or compensation for the 1.5° target in Paris during COP 21 in 2015.” Despite all efforts by small islands like those of the Caribbean to keep 1.5 as the rallying cry, global warming has continued. “There should be no delay, Ambassador Webson exclaimed. “We cannot do business as usual; we must move to net zero”.

Noting that there is so much at stake for those who are bravely attending the Glasgow meeting in person, he lamented that “addressing climate change has been a long journey, and this year we are at a critical point where COP 26 must deal with the tension between the time to close the Paris Rulebook and the point of implementation.”

The Glasgow Climate Change Conference (COP26) takes place during what the region describes as a historic time with multiple crises and a rapidly closing window of opportunity for an effective global response.

The Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre is an inter-governmental Caribbean Community (CARICOM) institution that is mandated by the CARICOM Heads of Government to coordinate the Region’s response to climate change. We maintain the Caribbean’s most extensive repository of information and data on climate change specific to the region, which in part enables us to provide climate change-related policy advice and guidelines to CARICOM Member States. In this role, the Centre is recognized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Environment Programme, and other international agencies as the focal point for climate change issues in the Caribbean. The Centre is also one of the few institutions recognized as a Centre of Excellence by United Nations Institute for Training and Research. CCCCC is empowering the Caribbean Community to act on climate change.

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