

Prime Minister's Intervention on Climate Resilience at CHOGM 2018

Mr Chairman,

I wish to speak to the issue of climate change which is impacting our countries in very significant ways. This is a matter that we must address as the impacts of climate change are becoming more and more evident day by day and with significant consequences.

We only have to look at the devastating impact of last year's hurricane season in the Caribbean region, to realise the damage caused by the warming of our seas. The countries that were adversely affected have not yet recovered and in two months, we are looking at the start of the next season with great concern given the forecast that it will be as active as the last season.

Mr Chairman, this means that as a Commonwealth we need to do two things. Firstly, we need to ensure that we build the resilience of our countries to withstand the impact of Climate Change. Secondly, we need to ensure that the negotiations under the Paris Agreement are successfully completed this year so that the Paris Agreement can become fully operational as scheduled. This is necessary to ensure that the international community is focused on achieving the emissions reductions that are necessary for the survival of many of our small island developing states and for implementing the mechanisms that were agreed upon to strengthen our resilience building capacities.

With regards to building resilience in our countries, this requires that we develop the ability to withstand the impact of climate change as well as recover quickly when the impact happens. It also requires significant investment in strengthening our infrastructure, developing new policy frameworks and developing the capacity of our people.

In Grenada, we see this as a matter of paramount national importance. For this reason, my government has established a dedicated Ministry of Climate Resilience, Environment, Fisheries, Forestry, Disaster Management and Information to ensure that it receives the attention that it requires.

We know that as Small Islands Developing States, we do not always have the resources to do what's necessary to protect our people and our national assets. We therefore continue to solicit and welcome additional assistance from the Commonwealth family to enable us to access the required resources.

We cannot overemphasise the need to advocate for changes in the global financial architecture including the incorporation of vulnerability considerations in accessing finance and in determining whether or not countries graduate from one level to another.

Mr Chairman, Grenada believes that the Commonwealth is a very relevant forum in this regard. This family with its diverse membership is well placed to continue championing the needs of our smaller and more vulnerable brothers and sisters and I look forward to working together to address these issues.

I want to close with the words of one of our legendary song writers and singers in the Caribbean, Mr Robert Nester Marley who reminded us to "Get up, stand up, stand up for your right. Get up stand up, don't give up the fight".

Thank you!