



STATEMENT

By

THE HONOURABLE ALLEN M. CHASTANET

Prime Minister of Saint Lucia

ON BEHALF OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY

(CARICOM)

at the

High-level Political Forum (HLPF) under the 74th Session of the General Assembly

September 24, 2019

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Mr. President,

In the Castries Call for Collective Commitment and Action on Sustainable Development, my fellow CARICOM Heads of Government and I declared that our region is confronting unprecedented development challenges that are moving beyond our capacity to cope. It is very unfortunate that I can readily cite the current example of the Bahamas - as an incredibly glaring example of the lived experience of small island developing states, attempting to develop sustainably, on the front lines of more frequent and intense extreme weather events.

The risk from climate induced natural disasters continues to grow. Small Island Developing states require support to address those challenges that constantly reverse and retard our developmental gains. Given our unique vulnerabilities, SIDS must receive the investment and support necessary to reduce disaster risk and build the resilience of their economies and communities. There is an urgent need for a disaster fund to assist SIDS in addressing risk management and building back better post disaster. We are encouraged by the support received from the UN Secretary General to advance the ECLAC debt for climate adaptation swap. This initiative will go a long way to not only free up domestic fiscal space, but it will also establish a resilience fund to finance adaptation projects.

CARICOM is acutely aware that the next decade represents a critical point in our region's journey towards meaningful and comprehensive sustainable development. Our member states are all fully committed to implementing the sustainable development goals by 2030. But as we continue to underscore, our small size, limited economic resources and vulnerability to natural disasters puts us at a tremendous disadvantage in achieving these ambitious goals. It is clear that our ambitions have to be supported by the international community, by civil society, and the private sector.

As we look back at areas where progress has been insufficient, we recognize that sustainable development solutions have generally been tailored along a one-size fits all approach for developing countries. There is an urgent need for a more nuanced approach - for SIDS specific solutions to accelerate meaningful implementation of the SDGs. We also recognize the need for states to meet their international Cooperation Commitments, as ODA to SIDS continues to decline at a time when our acute vulnerabilities demand it the most.

Mr. President,

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development represents our collective commitment to transform the world. To implement actions and policies that will accelerate us all toward sustainable and resilient societies. We have a decade left to ensure that our work truly does not leave anyone behind.

Thank you.