

# COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
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## ADDRESS BY

**HONOURABLE ROOSEVELT SKERRIT**  
**PRIME MINISTER and MINISTER OF FINANCE OF THE**  
**COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA**

**HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABLE**  
**DEVELOPMENT**  
**UNITED NATIONS**  
**NEW YORK**

**New York, March 28, 2019**

Please check against delivery

Secretary General the Honourable Antonio Guterres

Madam President of the General Assembly, H.E. Marina

Espinosa Madam President of ECOSOC, H.E. Rhonda King,

Distinguished Delegates.

Madam President, of the General Assembly at the onset I congratulate you as only the fourth woman to be appointed to this position in the nearly 74 years of the UN's existence and commend you for convening this important and timely meeting on a subject which the United Nations, through its Secretaries General, has deemed, "the defining human development issue of our generation." Permit me to also formally record my delight that two very capable female leaders from Latin America and the Caribbean have been elevated to the high offices of the Presidencies of the General Assembly and ECOSOC. The reports of your demonstrated competence and excellent performance have reached my ears and I must pause to indicate that in you both, I am well pleased.

Two short years ago, I stood in this Chamber and declared an "international humanitarian emergency" in Dominica, after an indirect strike by the Category 5 Hurricane Irma, followed a mere two weeks later, by a direct strike from the Category 5 Hurricane Maria; one of the most powerful storm systems ever recorded.

This hurricane literally reduced our homes, schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, general infrastructure and our economy to rubble. In the space of a few hours, Maria wiped out 225% of Dominica's GDP.

Those who saw Dominica in the dark days immediately after the hurricane asked out loud how or if we could ever recover. As a leader I was forced to face unprecedented and "unimaginable devastation," of the economy the natural and built environments and in the face of it all to motivate a demoralised population.

Today, I am happy to report that the Economic Commission of Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has predicted that the Dominican economy will grow by 9% this year. Our infrastructure is being rebuilt new homes and schools have gone up and a new modern hospital is under construction.

The new structures are stronger and better than before in order to make them more hurricane resistant.

Dominica has defied the odds and we are on a clear growth trajectory. Our national recovery has been led by the resilient and resourceful people of Dominica at home and abroad who were determined not to be defeated by the mighty forces of nature.

I also gratefully acknowledge the support of friends in the international community. From the seeds of Maria's destruction grew my Administration's policy initiatives and actions to build the first climate resilient nation in the world and to usher Dominica into a bright future.

Madam President, despite our social, economic and environmental risks vulnerabilities and precarious positions in the macro-global framework international rules compel small island developing states like mine and those of my Caribbean brothers and sisters to compete with and on the same terms as the world's largest economies.

The confluence of these factors when combined with the impacts of climate change has placed many SIDS at risk of not achieving the SDGs. Indeed our very survival is in jeopardy.

As we move toward the review of the SAMOA Pathway I point to these glaring inequalities as contemplated by SDG 10 and urge that this multiplicity of risks and threats be borne in mind in crafting and supporting a path to sustainable development for small island developing states.

While Katowice may have stopped the tide from turning against the Paris Agreement the global community must now scale up ambition and joint efforts to hold mean temperatures in the range of 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Recognising that we are on the front line of the battle against climate change now is the time for the global community to take decisive action to support SIDS in building capacity ensuring clear predictable sources of financing developing low carbon technologies offering a future to our young people providing a decent standard of living for our citizens and securing our sustainable development.

In that regard Madam President, I propose three specific suggestions:

- ❖ The first is for the development of a well-defined financing instrument for SIDS with uncomplicated procurement and reporting processes aimed at catalysing the roll-out of blue and green economy activities. This would also be geared at enabling the implementation of the SDGs and facilitating adaptation and mitigation in respect of climate change impacts. I make this call, even while saluting the work of the Green Climate Fund.
  
- ❖ The second is for specific provision to be made for SIDS in the upcoming review of the Addis Ababa, Financing for Development Agenda. This “carve-out” should recognise and take cognisance of the peculiar circumstances of SIDS. For the reality is that the much-touted lever of “innovative financing” characterised by insurance instruments and private sector financing has limited application in SIDS and LDCs.
  
- ❖ Third, is the creation of a mechanism for countries of the Global South to share knowledge best practices low carbon technologies and the services of national experts in helping each other to find solutions to the common problems of climate change and development.

I reiterate my view stated after Maria that the global population must see itself in a war against climate change. As with any other war we must take the threat seriously and mount a commensurate response.

We must employ defensive positions with appropriate policies and programmes. We must deploy human technical and financial resources to the front lines. We must build capacity and resilience.

We must equip our troops who are our populations to adapt and mitigate. Most of all we must recognise that the brotherhood of multilateralism requires us to fight as a unified army.

The global community and the multilateral system which serves it, must “leave no-one behind” as the casualties of the climate war and particularly not the vulnerable populations of the small island developing states.

Madam President if we can make progress along such lines during this very important session then finally, we would have moved the issue from “pending”, to “action”.

Madam President, I so plead.

Thank you.