

**ADDRESS TO THE UN HIGH LEVEL SUMMIT ON CLIMATE
CHANGE SUMMIT
HONOURABLE TILMAN THOMAS
PRIME MINISTER OF GRENADA AND CHAIR OF AOSIS
22 SEPTEMBER, 2009**

Salutations

Mr. President

I am deeply honoured for your gracious invitation to address this august body on the occasion of the UN high level summit on climate change. This summit is indeed quite timely as we approach the Copenhagen negotiations in December. Mr President, the entire world is waiting expectantly on the choices that Heads of States and Governments are making to address the global climate problem.

From the perspective of the countries whose very survival is at stake, the choices are indeed very clear.

The course of action is backed by the best available science which clearly indicates that urgent, decisive and ambitious actions are required at the global level, and that all countries must act cooperatively and collaboratively to address the climate problem.

Mr. President, despite statements to the contrary, the desired and most ethical course of action which includes agreement on an ambitious long-term target, is not unduly burdensome on the global economy.

In fact, it is now common knowledge that the cost of inaction or the cost of an inadequate level of ambition, far exceeds the cost of the course of action which guarantees the survival of major ecosystems, economies and people.

The choice therefore is quite clear.

Mr. President, the science is also compelling. For example, it has been shown that with temperature increases of 2°C above pre industrial levels, the world's system of coral reefs will be completely destroyed. Suffice it to say that much has already been said on the importance of coral reefs.

Therefore the choice is clear.

Mr. President, temperature increases of 2°C means that our major ecosystems the source of life, dependent goods and services will be destroyed. At 2°C the ability of the ecosystems to adapt declines dramatically. In fact it is argued that in many cases we are already at the tipping point with the distinct possibility of irreversible catastrophic effects.

Mr. President, as stated many times before, with temperature increases of 2°C, many of the economies of Small Island Developing States and island ecosystems will virtually disappear.

Climate refugee status is not an option, therefore the choice is clear and it is indeed an ethical choice.

It is therefore an imperative that all countries, subject to their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, adopt a low carbon development pathway that ensures the survival of SIDS, its culture and its people.

The Alliance of Small Island States has consistently called for and here I must repeat:

- long-term stabilisation of atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations at well below 350 ppm which will ensure that global average surface temperature increases, will be limited to well below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels;

- that global greenhouse gas emissions should peak by 2015 and decline significantly thereafter;
- that global GHG emissions be reduced by more than 85% by 2050;
- that Annex 1 GHG emissions be reduced by at that least 45 percent by 2020;
- and that Annex 1 GHG emissions be reduced by at least 95 percent of 1990 CO₂ levels by 2050.
- that non-annex emissions demonstrate significant deviations from baseline over comparable time periods.

Mr. President we further call for the provision of new, additional, stable and predictable financing for adaptation, technology transfer and capacity building at the level sufficient to cope with the scale of the problem with direct and simplified access.

These calls were reiterated at our just concluded AOSIS summit and forms the basis of the declaration adopted yesterday.

Mr President, the time is now.

We must achieve 1.5°C to stay alive.

There is no more time for inaction.

We must ensure that no Island be left behind.

I thank you.