

**Informal Leaders Meeting on Climate Change
convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations
and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
September 20th, 2021**

Co-Chairs' Summary

On September 20, 2021, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom convened an Informal Leaders Meeting on Climate Change to underscore the urgency of strengthening climate ambition and restore the spirit of trust and cooperation that made the Paris Agreement possible ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP 26) in Glasgow.

The Secretary-General and the Prime Minister were joined in this informal closed-door gathering by heads of state and governments representing the following Member States: Antigua & Barbuda, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Egypt, Fiji, France, Germany, Italy, Malawi, Maldives, Norway, Pakistan, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Sweden, and Tanzania. The presidents of the European Commission and the European Council also attended, along with representatives from China, India, Russia, and the United States.

The Secretary-General and the Prime Minister opened the meeting by emphasizing the need for leaders to step up and take responsibility to address one of the defining challenges of our time – the climate crisis. They emphasized that the world is off track, but that COP 26 provides an opportunity to turn the tide. A frank and honest conversation followed, led by the leaders of vulnerable countries who emphasized the need for more ambition and more solidarity to support their needs.

Leaders agreed that COP 26 in Glasgow comes at a critical juncture in tackling the climate crisis. The recent findings of the IPCC represented a “code red for humanity” and Leaders stressed that no effort should be spared over the critical decade of the 2020s and towards mid-century to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

Leaders also emphasized that current commitments fell far short of this goal and that based on the recent UNFCCC synthesis report on the NDCs submitted by Parties, the world was on a catastrophic pathway of 2.7 degrees Celsius of warming. They emphasized their commitment to working together to go further and faster to deliver on the objectives of the Paris Agreement. They agreed that immediate actions by all countries to raise the ambition level of their national commitments was paramount and that Leaders have a personal responsibility to stand and deliver in this effort. Any gap in ambition to 2030 would have to be addressed in Glasgow.

The critical leadership of developed countries and of G20 nations who account for 80% of global emissions was highlighted, but all countries needed to contribute to this global effort. Leaders recalled that common and differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in light of national circumstances remained a key principle in this respect. This required bolder leadership by developed countries in line with their historical responsibilities. However emerging economies would also have to go the extra mile and effectively contribute to emissions reductions.

Many also spoke to the opportunities provided by a low carbon and resilient transition, recognizing that climate action was key to the future of growth and investment. For this transition to be just, however, it would have to create decent jobs, deliver inclusive economic growth, embrace the leadership of women, and achieve the sustainable development and Paris goals.

Many leaders called for the acceleration of plans to phase out the use of coal globally as the single most important step to keep 1.5 degrees within reach. They welcomed the recent announcements from some major economies to end all international support to coal and many leaders called for a total cessation of coal finance and new coal build. They agreed on the urgency of scaling up existing efforts to halt the global coal pipeline and support developing countries in the transition to clean and renewable energy. Ahead of COP 26 the Secretary-General and the Prime Minister will continue to consult with key leaders on building a coalition of key countries, public and private finance institutions to support and accelerate the phasing out of coal and the just transition toward universal access to renewable energy.

All leaders insisted that developed countries must fulfil the longstanding pledge to mobilize \$100 billion dollars a year to support climate action in developing countries as a matter of trust and demonstrate that promises made will be kept. Many leaders called on all donors that had not yet done so to double their climate finance for the period 2021-2025 and deliver their fair

share of climate finance well before COP26, and some leaders committed to doing this. Support from international public and private financial institutions is also critical, including to address the debt challenges faced by many countries. Many leaders stressed that beyond the need for increased levels of finance, access to finance remains a significant challenge for vulnerable developing countries. They called for increased political attention to the issue of access, to ensure meaningful action is taken in the short term.

All leaders agreed that levels of finance for adaptation, a crucial component of the fight against climate change, were still far too low. The most vulnerable amongst them were hurting from the triple crises of COVID, debt and climate and needed immediate help. This issue must be addressed in Glasgow. As a first step, many leaders from developed countries either championed or pledged to commit at least 50 per cent of climate finance to adaptation and encouraged others, including multilateral development banks, to follow suit. Leaders also emphasized the growing loss and damage associated with increasing impacts of climate change, and the need to further support to developing countries to tackle this.

Leaders agreed to use their good offices and every available fora to engage other leaders on reviewing their existing commitments and take the extra step to bring to COP 26 their highest level of ambition. Leaders also recognized that COP 26 represented a key milestone for accelerating progress towards the 1.5 goal and demonstrating to the world and our youth that they were ready to step up their efforts in the most credible manner. They all reaffirmed their support for the COP26 Presidency.

COP President Alok Sharma emphasized his commitment to working with all countries towards successful outcomes at COP 26 and encouraged all Leaders to come to Glasgow with their highest ambition and having instructed their negotiators to come ready to address these issues and finalize the rulebook needed to fully implement the Paris Agreement.

In closing remarks, the Secretary-General stressed the urgency of action in the 2020s and called on countries to use every opportunity, including the upcoming G20 Summit in Rome to rebuild the spirit of collaboration, trust and solidarity that were the hallmarks of the Paris Agreement ahead of COP26.