



Office of
the Prime Minister

Opening Press Statement by Prime Minister Philip Davis at the Caribbean Regional Heads of Government Meeting in Preparation for COP27

16 August 2022

Good morning, members of the press.

I wanted to say a few words ahead of this historic week for our region, as The Bahamas hosts the first Regional Meeting of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean, within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

In 2019, almost three years ago exactly, our country was hit by a Category 5 storm. Hurricane Dorian devastated Abaco and Grand Bahama, ripping up homes and businesses and schools, shattering families and communities and resulting in the loss of many lives.

We live in a region accustomed to fierce storms. But the scale and scope of this tragedy, and the certainty that more Category 5 storms are in our future, underscored not just for Bahamians but for many throughout the Caribbean the urgency of addressing climate change.

There is no country on earth where the impact of climate change cannot be felt. But for small island nations like ours in this region, the threat is existential.

The World Meteorological Organization recently reported that sea levels rose more swiftly in the Caribbean region than anywhere else in the world in 2021. This is the front line.

We know we need to rebuild for resiliency, and to adapt to the realities of a warming planet. But that's a task made harder by the economic impact of Dorian – that one storm alone cost our small country billions of dollars.

In fact, half of my country's debt can be linked to hurricane damage.

Burning fossil fuels has generated an enormous amount of wealth, globally. Yet it is countries like ours, who have contributed such a tiny fraction of global emissions, who are both most vulnerable to the impacts of the accelerating changes in climate and badly positioned to afford adaptation strategies.

In other words, those who are the least responsible for the climate crisis are paying the highest price.

This week we come together, with shared determination, so that in November we will speak in one voice at COP27 on the most vital and urgent climate issues of our time.

Our goal is to construct practical climate financing solutions – ones that help us move forward, rather than lead to further indebtedness.

I remain optimistic about our collective ability to meet the challenges of climate change. I believe we can change course.

On behalf of the Government of The Bahamas, I would like to thank the UNFCCC for their support in hosting this regional head meeting.

Thank you.

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