

**Speech delivered by H. E. Didier Dogley, the Seychelles Minister of  
Environment, Energy and Climate Change at the Paris COP 21 on 8<sup>th</sup>  
December 2015**

Ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

I thank the people and the government of France for their warm welcome and gracious hospitality. It takes great tenacity to stand strong in the face of terrorism and drive forward such a crucial phase of both the UNFCCC process, and the history our planet.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement of the Republic of Maldives, speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small island States, AOSIS.

Our islands have always been the world's laboratories. The impacts of economic meltdowns, catastrophes, geopolitical conflicts and now climate change are always amplified on islands. We were the first to feel and suffer the direct consequences of climate change, although we contributed the least to its causes.

In Seychelles, we have been affected and continue to be affected by all these adverse impacts. Through coral bleaching we have lost 90 % of our coral reefs and as a result of repeated extreme storms in 2013, 2014 and 2015, we have had to divert 6% of our annual national budget for reconstruction.

We are at the tipping point. The future looks very bleak indeed for island nations, and it will be bleaker, should we leave Paris without a package agreement to halt climate change.

President James Michel of Seychelles, at the international SIDS conference in Samoa, called climate change the greatest collective crime in history against humanity. For countries to continue releasing millions of tons of carbon in the atmosphere with the knowledge that it will lead to the destruction of our only planet, Earth, and to cause immense suffering cannot be called anything other than irresponsible and reckless.

We - island nations - the conscience of the world, have committed to further invest in reducing our meager level of emissions of greenhouse gases. To achieve the national target of 0.003 ppm of emissions, as stated in the Seychelles INDC, we will have to invest over US\$ 300 million in the next 15 years in low carbon technologies.

As a small nation without economy of scale, we cannot achieve this alone and will need support in the form of finance, technology and expertise to achieve these goals.

We cannot afford to exist in a climate of 'business as usual'. We have heard all the rhetoric, now is the time to shift to action.

The world needs an ambitious, fair, balanced and far-reaching package agreement here in Paris, which aims for a significant reduction in global emissions leading to a global warming that does not exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial level.

We must agree on ambitious emission targets on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities with the rich developed countries taking the lead on cutting emissions and on financing. There must be a balance between mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage.

Adequate funding of US\$ 100 billion per annum must be made available to developing countries, in particular the most vulnerable i.e. SIDS and the least developed countries. In addition the agreement must deliver on capacity building, technology transfer and means of implementation.

This must happen in practice and not just rhetoric.

Seychelles is proud to announce that on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, it will buy back approximately US\$ 30 million worth of our debt from the Paris Club and South Africa through a debt swap for conservation and climate adaptation initiative. This innovative financing mechanism will provide Seychelles with about US\$ 500 000 every year to invest in building resilience and the Blue Economy.

We must work together as partners to conceive, support and implement more innovative financing and technological solutions.

Our presence here in Paris provides us all with an excellent and timely opportunity to turn over a new leaf. This is the moment to be remembered as the generation that was brave enough to take responsibility for the past, present and future. We have the means, the drive and knowledge to change the story future generations' will tell of our blue planet.

We have been part of the problem; let us be the solution here in Paris.