



## **Statement from a Caribbean Consortium of Youth Organisations calling on world leaders to set ambitious targets to keep global ambient temperature increase to below 1.5°C to minimise severe impacts on Small Island Developing States**

### **Caribbean Youth Call for Urgent Climate Action for Small Island Developing States**

#### **Key words and terms:**

Climate change	Small Island Developing States (SIDS)	Youth
Intergenerational equity	Climate justice	Resilience
Disaster risk financing	Disaster forecasting	

We, the children and youth of the wider Caribbean region, in solidarity with youth of the Pacific Islands and all other Small Island Developing States (SIDS), speak with a collective voice to signal our concern about the negative impacts of climate change on the wellbeing and sustainable livelihoods of our communities. Undoubtedly, SIDS are on the frontline of the climate crisis and are some of the most climate vulnerable nations on the Earth.

Our concerns were further heightened by the findings of the IPCC 2021 report which provided some of the strongest evidence yet that human activities are causing climate change and making extreme events more frequent. We insist that international governments intensify their efforts to limit the increase in ambient temperatures to not more than 1.5 °C and commit to meeting the pledges made in the Paris Agreement. Even if realised as the ceiling for warming, this temperature increase still translates to severe weather events and other impacts becoming the norm for our countries. It is important to act immediately to ensure that the damage we are inflicting on our environment does not outstrip our ability to adapt and survive.

While it is a small window of opportunity, the very worst effects of climate change can still be avoided if we act immediately to enhance global ambition for both mitigation and adaptation. We implore decision-makers globally to raise their ambitions to align with the existential nature of the climate crisis. We ask that their actions be guided by facts and science. Experts have stated that to achieve the targets set out in the Paris Agreement there must be a 45% reduction in greenhouse emissions by 2030 and net zero emissions must be achieved by 2050.

We fully support a change of mind-set from that of simply staying alive to a dynamic and innovative development approach to underpin resilience and support the survival of the SIDS communities such as the Caribbean. We, therefore, call on the global community, governments and people to fully support our 'Stay Alive and Thrive' campaign and defend the rights of SIDS to exist and lead dignified lives.

We believe that our youth will be severely affected by the implications of the decisions that today's leaders make about climate change and will continue to suffer from past inaction. Our creativity and energies can be harnessed to contribute to developing solutions to the climate crisis. We do not want to become victims of decisions made without us; rather we wish to be considered meaningful stakeholders in choices that will ultimately shape our collective future. We, therefore, call on global governments to enhance intergenerational equity by improving channels of communication and purposeful participation with the youth sector and creating avenues that enable young people to

effectively add their voices to the climate change decision-making process. To achieve the sustained and comprehensive changes that scientists indicate are now required, it will take intergenerational cooperation to build the capacity to realise the goal of a future where we are able to adaptively respond to the climate crisis and ensure secure economic, health and ecological outcomes for generations to come.

Furthermore, the direct effects of climate change, from extreme weather and rising sea levels to increased ambient temperatures and the impact that these have on water availability, ecosystems health and soil productivity will impact sectors of our societies differently and will have disproportionate effects on historically marginalised or underserved communities. We, therefore, call on international governments to acknowledge that climate change is inherently a social issue and urge that climate justice programmes be rolled out to proactively attend to these inequities and address them head-on through long-term mitigation and adaptation strategies. This should not only entail addressing socioeconomic factors like unemployment and housing but include innovative disaster risk financing, disaster risk forecasting, the expansion of sustainable economies and technological transfer. We wholeheartedly support the reaffirmation of the Loss and Damage mechanism articulated in the Paris Agreement as the principal way to address impacts associated with climate change on SIDS

Science has made it clear that the Earth is fast approaching its tipping point of climate disaster and, as the next generation who are already bearing the brunt of climate impacts, we are immensely dissatisfied at the pace and scope of climate action locally, regionally and most of all globally. We are very concerned about the global ability and will to act in time to halt the most severe climate change impacts. We request that the scale of response to the climate crisis matches the anticipated catastrophic consequences of inaction. We, therefore, ask that leaders around the globe commit the necessary resources, financial and technological, to accomplish what is needed to mitigate, adapt and respond to loss and damage.

We are adamant in our resolve towards addressing the climate change crisis and will relentlessly demand that the youth constituency be made a meaningful partner in the management of the process. We also advocate for coming generations, who cannot yet raise their concerns. We ask that we as a global community work together to hand off to following generations a future where they are not only able to survive but thrive. We will not accept that we can only stand by and watch and blame current governments for their actions now and in the future. It will be far too late by then. At the very least, we seek to join you in an intergenerational partnership to courageously fight for our future.

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*This statement was produced as the result of discussions and contributions from the over 600 members of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network (CYEN) throughout 18 countries in the wider Caribbean. It was developed to bring the concerns of young citizens of the Caribbean to the attention of decision makers from the Caribbean attending COP 26 of the UNFCCC in Glasgow, Scotland. The statement, while articulating support for the benchmark, 1.5C of global ambient temperature, seeks support for the 'Stay Alive and Thrive' climate justice campaign.*

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