

THE HONORABLE DR. DENZIL L. DOUGLAS

PRIME MINISTER, ST. KITTS AND NEVIS

ADDRESS

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

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Colleagues, Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I represent the island nation of St. Kitts and Nevis – the smallest nation in the western hemisphere, and one of the smallest nations in the world. Land mass differentials notwithstanding, all nations crave stability; all nations crave the knowledge that their respective fates are, by and large, in their own hands; and all nations crave consequential insulation from the irresponsible practices of other nations. While all nations expect, at one time or another, to deal with the vicissitudes of the market-place; and while all nations have reconciled themselves to the prospects of occasional social unrest or competing geo-strategic allegiances, it is truly beyond the realm of normalcy for any nation to have to grapple with floods and famine; hurricanes and refugee flows; dramatically altered rainfall, stunted agricultural production, and in some cases, even the disappearance of one's entire landmass, due to the excessive green houses gas emissions of other nations.

It is these abnormal challenges, and the abnormalities in prevailing global climatic conditions, that bring us here today. And it is the urgent need for normalcy – or some reasonable variation, thereof - that must propel our deliberations, and our negotiations, here in Copenhagen as well.

The economic burdens that global warming imposes on island nations like mine are considerable. Coastal revetment, desalination imperatives, and other programmatic demands, require us to shift scarce taxpayer dollars away from pressing national priorities in order to address the destabilizing environmental impacts that major green house gas emitters have on us. And these economic burdens speak powerfully to the need for the major greenhouse gas emitters to step forward – as a matter of justice and equity – to underwrite the technology transfer, adaptation, and mitigation measures now required in nations like mine, as a result of practices in nations like theirs.

St. Kitts and Nevis has carefully analyzed the discussions and positions on the table. The best option would be a legally binding agreement to strongly encourage our fellow world citizens that this issue should not be taken lightly. The challenges before us cannot be treated as mere

COP decisions. We have to determine definitively that we want to save this planet and all of its diverse peoples.

Mr. President, when the Alliance of Small Island States called for the stabilization of the earth's temperatures below 1.5°C of the preindustrial levels and the 350 parts per million of CO₂ equivalent in the earth's atmosphere, it was for our survival. We recognized that 2°C and 450 parts per million were unrealistic. I am here today to state categorically that we have rapidly run out of options and so compromise is no longer an option.

On that note, and with reference to the proposed US\$10 billion Fast Start Funds, recent resource allocation trends are instructive. Some 35% of all GEF 4 Resource Allocation, for example, was allocated to just three countries, to the complete exclusion of small island states. Dramatic improvements in both [i] access, as well as [ii] equity, for small island states, must therefore now be made a priority. Indeed, I urge, not only an earmark for small island states of at least 10% of overall allocations, but the participation of Small Island Developing States in the decision-making processes governing the allocation of these funds.

On the subject of inclusion, Mr. President, the Government of St. Kitts & Nevis strongly urges that Taiwan be afforded the opportunity to participate in global mechanism, negotiations, and other activities aimed at carbon emission reduction. That country's continued exclusion could, after all, result in a carbon leakage to the global mechanism.

Mr. President, my country negotiates as part of the Alliance of Small Island States, and the Group of 77 and China. In this process we are split along the lines of annex and non- annex parties. However, as a small island, whether the ton of green house gases comes from an annex 1 or a non-annex 1 party is immaterial. It will sink my country nevertheless, and so these deliberations in Copenhagen are of utmost urgency. My country believes in the concept of common but differentiated responsibility; we believe that we should all identify our respective responsibilities and follow-through with the requisite action. And this should all be recorded.

The consequences of either action – or inaction – on our part will be enormous. Let us act with discernment. Let us recognize the multifaceted repercussions of these deliberations over these historic few days. And let us act with dispatch and a sense of discipline in defense of the entire planet.

Thank you.