



MEDIA RELEASE

The Virtual Climate Summit organized by the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) snowballs the process for ramping up climate action, but countries still need to significantly step up and raise ambition by 2020 to keep global warming below 1.5C degrees.

Thursday 22 November: Countries of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) broke new grounds today by successfully organizing the *first* gathering of Heads of States and governments completely online at www.virtualclimatesummit.org, setting a precedent for a future of low emissions international fora. The zero-carbon summit, which came as a response to the scientific report by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released last September, aimed at providing a platform for all leaders to commit to raising climate ambition by 2020 to keep warming below 1.5C degrees as agreed in 2015 in Paris and to safeguard vulnerable communities worldwide from runaway climate change.

Pre-recorded video statements, panels and films were screened over 24 hours engaging various audiences over social media. More than 50 countries participated including Costa Rica, Germany, France, Fiji, Philippines, Mexico, Norway, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Palau, Finland, Cambodia, Switzerland, Rwanda, Grenada, Lebanon, Kiribati, Ireland, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sweden, Santa Lucia, Barbados, Haïti, Mongolia and others.

The Summit was an important show of leadership by the Marshall Islands and other countries most vulnerable to climate change, which optimized scarce resources to organize the Summit and build a coalition of frontrunners who will act as the driving force for a decision on enhancement at the upcoming UN negotiations (COP24) in Katowice and the UN Secretary General (UNSG) Summit in September 2019.

The Summit Host, President of the Marshall Islands and Chair of the CVF Dr. Hilda Heine announced new and ambitious climate targets becoming one of the first along with Fiji to respond to the Paris commitments and setting an example for other countries to follow to secure survival and protection of vulnerable communities worldwide. The official outcome of the Summit, particularly the “Jumemmej Declaration” (Marshallese for vigilance against threats) will feed into the agreed mechanism to promote enhanced action by all nations party to the Paris Agreement dubbed the

“Talanoa Dialogue” and sends a powerful call to arms to all leaders and non-state actors to enhance ambition by 2020 while emphasizing the role of the UNSG Summit in 2019. The Declaration also announces that all CVF countries will enhance their own climate contributions by 2020. CVF countries attempted to lead by example to emphasize that the transition to clean renewable energy and decarbonized economies that will keep warming below 1.5C is feasible and economically productive.

Although the Summit kicked off a snowball for enhanced commitments, which civil society will keep pushing to build up to a significant size during the climate talks in Katowice through to the UNSG Summit in 2019, many countries missed the intended purpose of the online meeting, either by not participating in the Summit or by failing to present new strong and ambitious commitments. As many speakers in the Summit expressed, enhanced commitments are the only way to safeguard vulnerable and other communities from dangerous climate impacts that are threatening their survival and peace and security worldwide.

The IPCC’s special report was clear. To keep the world safe from climate disasters, countries should take unprecedented actions to cut carbon emissions and a complete phase-out of coal by all members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development by 2030.

The Summit saw the participation of a number of civil society and organizational leaders including the UN, World Bank, the Global Environment Facility, the Elders, Oxfam, Mission 2020, SEforAll, Greenpeace, the WorldWide Fund for Nature, the World Resources Institute, CARE and others.

Quotes:

Caroline Kende-Robb, Secretary General, CARE International:

“We will take a giant step towards keeping warming below 1.5C when we realise that women and girls are not only among the most affected but also leading positive change. CARE’s work with communities from Tanzania to Niger and elsewhere proves that climate justice and gender justice go hand in hand as women are initiating income-earning and renewable energy projects that benefit whole communities. A game-changer would be to have locally driven, gender-inclusive humanitarian response with women’s voice at the policy table and the financial means to make their recommendations reality.

Helen Mountford, WRI Global Director of Economics and Programme Director of the New Climate Economy

“The Climate Vulnerable Forum is an important global moment for leaders to recognize the incredible economic and social opportunities to step-up climate action and achieve together the 1.5oC goal, as well as the mounting risks of delaying action. The latest New Climate Economy report shows that bold climate action can deliver \$26 trillion in economic benefits between now and 2030, reduce deaths from air pollution, create jobs, and important new opportunities for women. We need to urgently seize these opportunities. With the announcements they’re making at the summit to enhance their Paris commitments, the CVF countries are providing leadership for the entire world, and as new WRI analysis shows, they can do so in ways that also deliver critical development benefits in energy, transport, and agriculture.”

Josianne Gauthier- Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE) Secretary-General

“The Climate Vulnerable Forum, through its online summit, reiterated a crucial message to the upcoming COP 24: all countries have to step up their climate commitments and urgently make all the possible efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 C. For CIDSE this means engaging society in a real shift in our economies and values to embrace a new system where we can live in balance with nature and in dignity. This requires an ambitious yet possible and needed change in the way we relate to energy, agriculture and to one another. In the panel we have the honor to host within the CVF we will listen to the stories of courageous people in the midst of this struggle and our commitment is to walk with them.”

About Climate Action Network:

Climate Action Network (CAN) is a global network of over 1200 NGOs working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels. www.climatenetwork.org

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