

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

ON MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

BY

MEMBER STATES AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF THE ORGANISATION OF
EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES

13 April 2023
State House
Roseau, Commonwealth of Dominica

We, the Ministers of National Security and Immigration of the Governments of the Member States and Associate Members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), having gathered at the second Meeting of the Council of Ministers in Roseau, Commonwealth of Dominica;

In the spirit of regional integration and friendship that ties the Member States and Associate Members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, namely Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Martinique and Guadeloupe;

Deeply concerned by the adverse effects of the climate change crisis on our people, place an urgent call for enhanced cooperation and action to address the following:

- (a) The devastating impacts of hydrometeorological and geophysical hazards which drive massive displacement across the region;
- (b) The progressive effects of slow onset hazards and degradation processes on livelihoods in the region, with critical effects in most exposed economic sectors, driving different patterns of internal and international migration;
- (c) The increasing need for the relocation of communities most exposed to environmental hazards and the implication of these movements in terms of economic and non-economic loss and damage;
- (d) The paucity of data, evidence and statistics on the impact of climate change on human mobility in the region;
- (e) The limitations of partnerships and financing to respond to the climate crisis adversely affecting the mobility of our people in the region.

Recognizing that the OECS Region is severely affected by a wide range of environmental and climate hazards, notably including extreme tropical storms and hurricanes, water scarcity, environmental degradation, sea level rise and volcanic eruptions which drive multiple forms of human mobility – migration, displacement, planned relocation - and create vulnerability patterns for most exposed populations.

Note with concern that groups including women, girls, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, migrants including stateless and undocumented persons, displaced persons, and other minorities might be threatened with marginalization in exercising their rights to access climate action opportunities;

Guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966; UN Council Resolution 35/20; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement 2015; the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 1994; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; the Agenda for the Protection of Cross Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change 2015; the New Urban Agenda 2017 Article 28; the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992; the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration 2018; the Global Compact on Refugees 2018; UN ILO International Labour Standards (ILS); the Glasgow Climate Pact 2021; the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas 2001 and the Revised Treaty of Basseterre 2010;

Recalling previous Decisions of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation, where appropriate, at the national, regional and international levels;

Recalling that the Paris Agreement acknowledges that climate change is a common concern of humankind; that adaptation is a global challenge faced at local, national, regional and global dimensions, and contributes to the protection of people, livelihoods and ecosystems; taking into account the urgent and immediate needs of OECS Small Island Developing States (SIDs) that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change;

And the Paris Agreement FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/ Decision 50. requesting the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism to establish, according to its procedures and mandate, a task force to complement, draw upon the work of and involve, as appropriate, existing bodies and expert groups under the Convention including the Adaptation Committee and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group, as well as relevant organizations and expert bodies outside the Convention, FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1 8 to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change;

Recalling the mandates that emerged from the 27th UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Sharm el-Sheikh in November 2022 towards robust climate action, enhanced resilience to adapt to the effects of climate change and financial support for developing countries, including on funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change;

Noting the Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh work program on the Global Goal on Adaptation with a view to enhance adaptation action and support in line with the Cancun Climate Change Adaptation Framework and the Decision 1/CMA.3 Glasgow Climate Pact (2021) acknowledging the rights of migrants when taking action to address climate change;

Aware of the progressive work of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in line with the Working Group II report on 'Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability;

Recognizing and appreciating the leadership of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, in this dialogue on environmental degradation, climate change and migration;

Further recognizing and appreciating the partnership with international organizations – International Organization for Migration (IOM), Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security UNTFHS) – in facilitating this important process on environmental degradation, climate change and migration;

Determined to strengthen economic growth and development, sustain social cohesion and stability in our region;

Desirous of declaring our commitment to timely response regarding critical matters of environmental degradation, climate change and migration and its adverse impacts on people and communities through enhanced cooperation on climate change and human mobility;

In this context therefore, We, Ministers of National Security and Immigration of the Governments of the Member States and Associate Members of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), having gathered key messages and experiences from government experts, youth and community leaders as well as development partners, in the spirit of international cooperation and regional integration hereby commit to:

1. Build and strengthen climate resilience and adaptive interventions for communities living in fragile ecosystems, exposed coastlines, flood prone water basins, mountain slopes and hillsides, including through the development of adequate regional and national legislation, policies and strategies for actions that incorporates the human security approach;
2. Implement and domesticate the provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and related bodies, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, underscoring government's role to prevent and address displacement and leverage the positive outcomes of well-managed migration;
3. Develop concrete solutions for persons crossing borders in the contexts of disasters, environmental degradation and climate change on the basis of national legislation and regional frameworks;
4. Facilitate a conducive regulatory and policy environment to harness the socio-economic benefits of remittances, trade and investment;
5. Engage multilateral development banks and financial institutions and development partners as well as the overall climate financing system to fund solutions to address environmental and climate mobility;
6. Create and/or increase investment in the circular economy, renewable energy and energy efficiency, climate smart agriculture, green blue and orange economy, digital economy and nature based solutions;

7. Involve local authorities and engage in urban planning to address population movements towards urban areas as a result of adverse impacts of climate change, including promoting rural-urban collaboration to reduce vulnerability and create adaptive mechanisms for safe migration and access to sustainable livelihoods;
8. Establish and strengthen regional and national weather, climate and disaster management institutions and systems to generate accurate, timely data and information on climate change impacts on human mobility;
9. Address knowledge gaps that includes understanding and applying indigenous knowledge and practices in the development of appropriate adaptation responses, to reduce the context-specific vulnerability of communities to the impacts of climate change.
10. Apply and integrate gender, human rights-based and human security approaches in the design and implementation of policies relating to the climate change-migration nexus.
11. Establish an OECS Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Climate Change, Environment and Migration; develop a Plan of Action for the implementation of this Declaration and monitor and report regularly on progress of implementation by Member States and Associate Members.
12. Request the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) to take forward the work launched through this process and request to launch this OECS Ministerial Declaration at COP28 with the intention to continue the work beyond COP28.
13. We further request the Parties to:
 - a) Take action to avert, minimize and address displacement in the context of climate change and disasters both across and within borders;
 - b) Strengthen support to countries and communities most vulnerable to climate change impacts to access new and additional scaled-up climate financing;
 - c) Facilitate capacity building and technology transfer for climate action and human mobility;
 - d) Strengthen support to people affected by climate related hazards and facilitate capacity building and socioeconomic opportunities aimed at reducing threats to human security;
 - e) Enable frameworks to leverage the positive outcomes of well-managed migration through remittances, evacuations and planned relocation, among others;
 - f) Commit to deliberate and pervasive public awareness and education on the nature, potential impacts and mitigation practices pertaining to climate change.

We remain committed to address the climate change crisis and its effects on our people and communities in the OECS region.

DONE AT ROSEAU this 13th Day of April 2023 in two originals in English and French both texts being equally authentic.

Signed:



Name of Minister: STEPHEN BENJAMIN

Ministry/ Designation: Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, Public Safety, Immigration and Labour

Signature: [Handwritten signature]



Name of Minister: RAYBUAN BLACKMOORE

Ministry/ Designation: Ministry of National Security

Signature: [Handwritten signature]



Name of Minister: The Honourable Dickon Mitchell

Ministry/ Designation: Prime Minister and Minister with responsibility for National Security, Home Affairs, Public Administration, Information and Disaster Management, Infrastructure, Public Utilities, Civil Aviation and Transportation

Signature:



Name:

St Kitts and Nevis: Howard Lawrence Drew D. 21



Name of Minister: VIRGINIA ALBERT POYOTTE

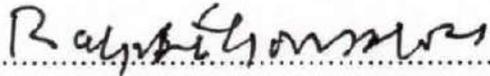
Ministry/ Designation: Minister for Public Service Home Affairs
Labour & Gender Affairs

Signature:



Name of Minister: Dr. The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves

Ministry/ Designation: Prime Minister, Minister of National Security, Legal Affairs and Information

Signature: 



Name of Minister: Dr. the Hon. Natalio D. Wheatley

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Ministry/ Designation: Premier and Minister of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change

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Signature: 