

Third Ministerial Dialogue - Vulnerable Twenty (V20) Group
12:30 pm – 1:45 pm, Thursday, 6 October 2016

Madam Administrator, Distinguished Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset I would like to thank the organizers for arranging this dialogue. Maldives has worked closely with all the partners, and we look forward to continued close collaboration in future.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the outgoing Chair Philippines and the congratulate the incoming Chair of Ethiopia.

I would also like to thank the various presenters for the helpful updates on the various initiatives undertaken by the V20.

Turning to the issue of climate finance, which is the focus of my remarks today, I'd like to highlight a few key learnings from our Maldivian experience and perspective.

First, our development projects need to be driven by us and not our partners. Today, donors and multilateral development banks and agencies are rightly pushing to support climate initiatives in developing countries. However, for recipient countries, such as Maldives, our projects are driven by our comprehensive national development plan which seeks to grow and sustain our economy, build resilience to climate change, and provide a better life for our people. The lines between climate adaptation, sustainable development, women's empowerment, and environmental protection are often difficult to draw. For this reason, climate finance is integral to sustainable development, particularly for vulnerable countries. We need to continue to advocate for our nationally driven priorities in allocating climate finance especially for adaptation, and avoid a narrowing of focus by funders to emissions reducing projects. We also need to ask for greater transparency in how the goal to mobilize US\$100 billion by 2020 is being met.

The second point I would like to make is about the issue of vulnerability itself. In Paris, during the last days of negotiations of the Paris Agreement, consensus was at risk because of the difficulty in defining who is most vulnerable to climate change. This led to an unhelpful situation where groups of developing countries were challenging each other on their vulnerability.

We managed through a very carefully crafted Agreement to put this issue to bed, but we need to be careful to not reopen these wounds. There are countries already categorized as vulnerable in the UN and by the international scientific community such as IPCC. Therefore we do not need to reclassify the countries but rather focus on enhancing on climate action in those countries.

This means that we should avoid proposing schemes where climate finance is tied to some vulnerability criteria. It will be unconstructive and will just lead to a reopening of contentious discussions and I need not remind colleagues that the membership of the CVP and V20 are self-selected and we have no greater inherent claim to vulnerability than anyone else.

The last point I would like to quickly raise is that we need to limit the continued fragmentation of climate finance. As we see a proliferation of different funders and agencies engaged in this type of work, it puts small countries with limited capacity, such as Maldives, in a position where we need to build the capacity to engage with an ever increasing set of agencies and funders. We need to undertake efforts to consolidate climate finance in key institutions, such as the Green Climate Fund, and work to build the capacity of countries to access these funds.

I thank you for your attention and am eager to hear about the experiences of colleagues, and I look forward to our continued constructive engagement with each other.

Thank you.