

Climate change requires most urgent mitigation measures, African leaders tell UN Assembly

21 September 2017 – Citing the spate of recent devastating hurricanes, African leaders – from small island States to larger landlocked countries – mounted the podium of the United Nations General Assembly today to call for urgent measures to mitigate the effects of climate change.

“We urge the international community to not only respond generously to these countries’ calls for support, but to take far more seriously the need to upscale the urgent action required to prevent, prepare for, adapt to and recover from such increasingly destructive climate-related disasters,” Seychelles President Danny Faure said, citing recently afflicted countries.

“The thoughts of the Government and people of Seychelles go out to the millions of people in South Asia, Africa, the United States, and Mexico, and our island brothers and sisters in the Caribbean who have suffered unimaginable losses from floods, hurricanes and other forms of extreme weather these past months,” he told the Assembly’s 72nd general debate.

Mr. Faure called for an inclusive approach to stepping up implementation of the [Paris Agreement](#) on limiting global warming greenhouse emissions.

“According to the latest science, all stakeholders need to be involved if the international community is to drastically scale up our collective climate action to achieve our targets,” he said.

[Full statement available here](#)



Vice-President Mokgweetsi Eric Masisi of Botswana addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Vice-President Mokgweetsi Eric Masisi of Botswana appealed to the United States to re-consider its decision to withdraw from Paris accord. “As you would be aware, the challenge of climate change requires collective action, as no single country can successfully address this challenge on its own,” he said.

“It is as if the recent hurricanes and their disastrous effects were to underscore to the American Administration that climate change is real,” he added, stressing that the adverse impacts of climate change undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development.

[Full statement available here](#)



President Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

The leaders also addressed a host of world issues, from terrorism to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) nuclear programme, and from the need for expansion of the 15-member UN Security Council with permanent African representation to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that seek to haul hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, hunger and social ills by 2030.

Sao Tome and Principe President Evaristo do Espirito Santo Carvalho lamented that funding for measures mitigating climate change lacks the support of the international community.

"Cooperation agreements should be established with ambitious funding for climate issues, as well as ensuring effective and efficient transfer of technology by the more developed countries," he said.

"Combating the phenomenon of climate change is perhaps the most complex objective for which all humanity is called upon to intervene. The success of this fight is perhaps the greatest legacy we can leave to future generations."

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth of the Republic of Mauritius addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth said addressing climate change is critical to successfully implementing the [2030 Agenda](#) of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aim to eliminate a host of social ills, including hunger, poverty and lack of access to education and health care.

"With the increasing number and intensity of climate related disasters – storms, droughts, flash floods, to name but a few – it would be naive on our part to dismiss the climate change," he said.

Mitigating the effects of climate change will require substantial effort and resources, especially for small island developing States. "While we welcome the generous pledges made so far, including the creation of the [Green Climate Fund](#), we need to streamline and simplify the procedures for these States to access these funds, especially in the light of the recent events."

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Umaro Sissoco Embaló of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Guinea-Bissau Prime Minister Umaro Sissoco Embaló the threats of climate change were of "a planetary scale with prospects of frightening, and not unlikely, consequences."

On the situation in his own country, which has had a troubled past, he said: " We continue to experience a period of institutional challenges... These are challenges related to the functioning of some of our core political institutions, namely parliament and the government.

"But it is with profound gravity that I inform you that civilian peace reigns in my country. There are no reports of universal human rights violations that merit complaints or are worthy of concern."

[Full statement available here](#)



Prime Minister Selom Komi Klassou of Togo addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Togo's Prime Minister Selom Komi Klassou stressed the need to carry out the Paris accord as well as the [SDGs](#).

"The challenges facing our world have a real impact on development of Africa," he said. "And one of the imperatives, in order to confront it effectively, remains the continent's economic transformation.

"We realize this transformation depends, firstly on the responsibility of the African elite, but international solidarity is also prerequisite," he added. "Investment needs to be increased in the fields of science, industry, agribusiness and high technology."

[Full statement available here](#)

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN General Assembly's annual debate to 'focus on people,' ensuring decent life for all](#)