

Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly,
February 26, 2024

Government of Barbados National Statement

Your Excellency Ms Leila Benali, Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of the Kingdom of Morocco, President of UNEA-6;

Heads of Government, Ministers, and Excellencies;

Madame Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP;

Distinguished delegates

On behalf of the Government of Barbados, I wish to thank the Presidency of Morocco for its leadership UNEA-6

I wish to express thanks to the Government and people of Kenya for their warm welcome and hospitality in hosting UNEA-6, as well as to Madame Anderson and the UNEP Secretariat for the support provided to me and my delegation.

The Government of Barbados aligns with the statement of the **Group of 77 and China**, and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. We welcome the range of resolutions negotiated in the spirit of compromise and flexibility.

In keeping with the theme of this UNEA-6, Barbados is conscious of the need to combat the climate crisis, and domestically, we are taking various actions in line with the Paris Agreement.

Through the ongoing Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation Programme, the Government is scaling its commitment to be a fossil fuel free nation by 2030 by creating the enabling environment for public and private sector investment to drive green economic activity. Sectors targeted in this respect include renewable energy generation, transport, tourism, housing and agriculture.

The electrification of public and private transport is vital in this regard. As such, in our 2023 Budget presentation, the Government of Barbados committed to

- Extending tax holidays on the purchase of electric and plug-in hybrids by an additional two years until 31 March 2026; and
- Establishing a low-interest Revolving Fund for the acquisition of, or conversion to, electric, plug-in hybrid, CNG, or solar powered passenger vehicles for the Public Service Vehicle sector.

The protection of our terrestrial and marine natural heritage and biodiversity in tandem with developing resilient and sustainable livelihoods remains a priority. In this regard Barbados is implementing a national Gullies Ecosystems Management Programme; scaling up soil ecosystem restoration interventions through the GEF-financed Caribbean SIDS SOILCARE programme; and strengthening the policies for the Barbados National Park and System of Open Spaces through the newly adopted 2023 Physical Development Plan.

Madam President,

Barbados has an Exclusive Economic Zone of approximately 424 times its territory and we are in the process of advancing our Marine Spatial Plan and National Ocean Policy buttressed by the Barbados Environmental Sustainability Fund. We therefore welcome the adoption of the UNEA-6 resolution on “Strengthening Ocean and seas governance to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution”.

Barbados also reiterates the commitment made at UNEA-5 to maintain the ambition of negotiations on a new global instrument on ending plastic pollution.

Finally Madame President, as we look to the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States to be held in our Caribbean sister nation, Antigua and Barbuda, in May of this year, I call on members of this assembly to join in ensuring the adoption of an ambitious and resilience-building focussed outcome that targets the structural vulnerabilities inherent in SIDS. I further ask that UNEA-7 and UNEP consider the establishment of an implementation framework for the environmental dimensions of that expected outcome. I thank you.