

**Statement**  
**High-level Ministerial Dialogue on the Environmental Dimension of COVID-19 Sustainable Development Recovery**

**Sen. the Hon. Simon Stiel**  
**Minister with responsibility for Climate Resilience and the Environment,**  
**Ministry of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Climate Resilience and the Environment**  
**Government of Grenada**

**The Environmental Dimension of COVID-19 Sustainable Development Recovery**

**[Salutations]....,**

Thank you Chair,

[Colleagues], we are at a crossroads - a crossroads where we can decide to either continue along the path that has led to the current confluence of crises we now face.....or choose to embark on a new journey towards a sustainable development recovery.

It is no secret that these crises, consisting of the devastating impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, a health pandemic, and the resultant economic crisis,.....are all inextricably linked.

The COVID pandemic has forced all countries and regions around the world, including Latin America and the Caribbean, to focus on protecting lives and livelihoods through the development of social and economic stimulus packages....

This has provided us an opportunity to review our development model and move to a **new** model which is **more inclusive....more just.....**and which could restore a better human relationship with nature;.....an opportunity to ensure that the investments in recovery, combine environmental and sustainable development dimensions.

Unfortunately, this opportunity to accelerate a green transition has to date, been broadly missed.

Colleagues, the pandemic recovery stimulus packages we develop must align with, our Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the Disaster Risk Reduction Framework, and Financing for Development Framework.

The key question therefore is.... **how do we do this? .... How do we strengthen sustainable recovery at the local, national, regional, and international levels?**

To start, we must identify the opportunities for alignment between the stimulus packages and the global development frameworks. In particular, those areas in which

there is a need for action on the SDGs and Paris Agreement, and **where those actions create jobs and generate economic growth.**

In this regard, one perfect opportunity is the **new Nationally Determined Contributions** which we are developing under the Paris Agreement.....How many of us have examined ways in which aspects of the implementation of the NDCs can be integrated into our recovery packages, thus creating more green jobs in the economy?

Another excellent opportunity is to include the use of **nature-based solutions** in developing our climate change response plans. We can take our coastal zones as one example and ask the question – are we solely focused on using grey solutions for coastal protection? Or are we utilising the potential of our coral reefs and mangroves to build coastal resilience? Indeed, nature-based solutions can be more cost effective as compared to hard engineered structures.

Our second requirement is that we have to **strengthen our capacity to implement.** This requires that we strengthen our enabling environments in areas such as human capacity building, policy development, regulatory frameworks, monitoring systems including data registries and enforcement mechanisms to name a few. Unless we utilize these implementation-focused tools, our plans will remain mere words of paper.

**A third requirement**, and possibly the most critical, is the need for **greater access to affordable financing, at scale and at speed**, for the implementation of priority initiatives.

Of course, traditional funding mechanisms from traditional partners which we are all familiar with, remains a priority.....but these are not enough, we have to go beyond these traditional mechanisms.....

We have to accelerate our exploration of new and innovative instruments such as fiscal incentives for environmental conservation and protection, green bonds, debt-for-nature swaps, sovereign guarantees, carbon taxes, to name a few. The enabling environment could include a range of incentives such as tax relief for investment in green initiatives, and subsidies for investment in specific geographical areas.

We also have to bring new partners to the table - the private sector is a key partner currently still on the fringes of the conversation. The private sector could be a significant source of investment and expertise and we should take up the challenge of deepening their role in this sustainable recovery process.

We have seen some examples around the world of countries and cities where such innovative practices have been initiated. A number were on show at the recent Climate

Adaptation Summit, including Grenada's Climate Smart Cities programme. The challenge for us is to progress these approaches at scale.

So in closing, as we sit at this cross-roads today, the challenge for us is to collectively turn our backs on the path that has led to our current crises and to chart a new course that will lead us to a sustainable recovery that will simultaneously address our economic crisis, our climate crisis, our biodiversity crisis and our health crisis.

**Let's move forward on the path to a sustainable development recovery.**

I thank you