

**SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PRESS CONFERENCE**  
**DOMINICA, 8 OCTOBER 2017**

Thank you very much, your Excellency, for your kinds words and for the warm welcome the Government and the people of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

This visit of solidarity with your people and your Government and I have to say that even if I had heard about it, if I have seen images in the media and our own UN system, I was deeply impressed by two things: first by the dramatic level of devastation, systematic devastation in your country. I have never seen anywhere else in the world a forest completely decimated without one single leaf in any tree and even if I come from Barbuda, and in Barbuda, I could see also most of the houses destroyed, Barbuda is a small island linked to Antigua and Antigua can support Barbuda. But your country is the whole country that's been decimated and it's been in every community I see. Most of the buildings destroyed or heavily damaged. And on the other hand, I was impressed by the effective response that your Government and your people with the resilience of your communities was able to put together. A response that allows what I see today to be very different already from what we could see immediately after the hurricane.

I want to thank the distinguished of the media that have accompanied me and I apologize if I repeat myself, but wanted to address also particularly the media of Dominica, and to say that, in the expression of the solidarity that these visits represents, I have to main concerns: one is to make sure that the international community fully recognizes that this intensity of hurricanes and these multiplications of hurricanes in the Caribbean this season is not an accident. It is the result of climate change. I see sometimes people saying, well, we always have hurricanes, we always had storms, or we always had droughts. It is true. But what we never had is this intensity, this frequency and these devastating impacts. According to the research done by the World Meteorological Organization in the last 30 years, we have seen tripled the number of natural disasters and vie times more the economic damage caused by them. And obviously, it's climate change that is behind that.

And today there is the scientific proof of the link between climate change and the intensity of these hurricanes, and it is linked to the increased

temperature of the water in the oceans. When a hurricane moves through the ocean, as the water is warmer, there is more evaporation, there is more vapor in the air, rains in general, rainstorms tend to be much heavier, but the hurricane, instead of dissipating, is fueled by moving over the ocean because of the increase in the temperature of the water and that is why we see hurricanes starting with one level and going up to level 5 and that's why we see such devastating impacts. Today, there is a scientific proof that climate change is largely responsible for this dramatic increase in the intensity and devastation caused by the hurricanes in the Caribbean and by many other phenomena around the world.

And the other expression of solidarity is to say that it is clear and it must be clear for the international community that the level of support that Dominica requires cannot be achieved through the traditional instruments. There must be, even if Dominica is a middle-income country, but a middle-income country with an enormous vulnerability that was proven in a very dramatic way, there must be a review of the way middle-income countries that are particularly vulnerable to external shocks, are supported with direct support with concessional loans. There must be new financial instruments, bonds of different natures, linked mainly to the buildup of resilience. There must be a way to look into the debt of these countries and to transform it into an instrument of reconstruction and resilience. There must be a number of innovative ways of financing that are essential for this country to be able, even with the extraordinary effort of the Government of the people, for the country to be able to rebuild itself and I would like to say how much I appreciate the vision and the wisdom with which the Prime Minister has claimed that, not only he wants the country to be reconstructed, but he wants the country to become the first entirely climate resilient country in the world and I would say the first green climate resilient country in the world because that is what I heard in the different meetings we had. In whatever we will be able to do, the United Nations is entirely at your side. We have been cooperating in your efforts with our limited capacity but I am proud that my colleagues are doing their best but our voice will be together with your voice claiming for the world to assume its responsibilities in relation to climate change for the Paris Agreement to be implemented and for increased ambition to be put in place and at the same time for the adequate financial instruments to be created and with easy access in order for your reconstruction that you are so determined in pursuing your reconstruction becomes a real possibility for the benefit of the people of Dominica but also for benefit of all the

citizens of this region of the Caribbean that can face at any moment a similar situation as the one that you have faced. My total solidarity and my gratitude for your very warm welcome.

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