**JOINT STATEMENT FROM MEMBERS OF THE GREEN GROUP**

**"CLIMATE MOMENT", NEW YORK, 24 SEPTEMBER 2020**

*The members of the Green Group – Cabo Verde, Costa Rica, Iceland, Singapore, Slovenia and the United Arab Emirates – reaffirm their commitment to maintain momentum on climate action geared towards an ambitious COP26.*

Climate change is moving faster than we are. Despite encouraging progress, the gap between climate reality and climate action is wider than ever. Along with the global youth protest movement, the Climate Action Summit convened by the UN Secretary General last year brought a much needed wake up call. The summit generated unprecedented mobilisation of governments, industry, financial sector, civil society and youth, and started important work through coalition action tracks and pledges, which members of the Green Group joined.

In the aftermath of the summit, the Green Group continued to support bold climate action with a joint statement at COP25 in Madrid calling for increased ambition on mitigation and adaptation, and joint statements on World Water Day, World Ocean Day, and World Bee Day.

Cabo Verde remains committed to the Paris agreement and to the enhancement of its National Determined Contribution (NDC), in a context also characterized by a fragile marine ecosystem and persistent drought. The latter intensifies its grief over time, gradually affecting the country, leading to soil degradation and water scarcity with a devastating effect on life and livelihoods, justifying that greater attention should be given to drought and desertification trough the global management of climate change. Two weeks ago, after 3 years of consecutive drought, Cabo Verde was hit by abundant floods that caused an emergency with huge losses and damages. To build resilience Cabo Verde is promoting integrated water resource management, developing the adaptability of agro-silvo-pastoral production, protecting and preventing degradation in coastal areas. Cabo Verde also chose the energy transition path with renewable energies to reduce energy dependence and promote low carbon emissions.

Costa Rica has recently granted constitutional rank to the human right of access to clean water, paving the way for the protection of forests and all ecosystems that not only secure the availability of this precious resource, but also contribute to mitigate climate change and soil degradation. Taking advantage of our near 100% clean energy production, our NDC is being enhanced towards facilitating investments towards a fully decarbonized transit matrix, which will generate long-term green development and wellbeing. Moreover, the country has developed a new phase of its successful scheme of Payments for Environmental Services, to be launched by the end of 2020, which plans to include payments for the natural recarbonization of soils, amongst other nature-based solutions that will be rewarded for their contribution to tackling climate change. The country is also making all efforts to operationalize article 2.1(c) of the Paris Agreement, by –Inter alia – completely phasing our fossil-fuel subsidies and smoothly implementing a system by which private and public financial institutions will report on the mitigation and adaptation contributions of credit operations within their portfolios. On the multilateral arena, Costa Rica continues to seek support in the Human Rights Council to table a resolution that internationally recognizes the Right to a Healthy Environment, as a tool to strengthen this vital right, intrinsically linked to the fight against climate change.

The Icelandic Government has, since the summit, updated its action plan on climate change with substantial upscaling of the former plan. Although Iceland already enjoys virtually carbon-free primary energy production, fossil fuels are still used in sectors such as transport, fisheries, and agriculture. The aim is set for a push to decarbonize those sectors. Furthermore, work is ongoing to decarbonize industrial processes through carbon mineralization technologies that are being developed. Iceland will also increase substantially its efforts in afforestation and land restoration, (i.e. revegetation and restoration of wetlands). The final target is to make Iceland carbon neutral by 2040.

Despite the ongoing threat of COVID-19, we must not lose sight of the longer-term challenge of climate change. It is for this reason that Singapore submitted our enhanced NDC and Long-Term Low Emissions Development Strategy (LEDS) to the UNFCCC in March 2020. It is our hope that this would encourage other Parties to do likewise. Our enhanced NDC and LEDS will guide our transition to a sustainable, low-carbon and climate-resilient future. We will continue to decarbonise our power sector, raise energy efficiency, and deploy low-carbon solutions for buildings, transport and waste management. Our carbon tax, the first in Southeast Asia, complements these measures. These are ambitious goals given our constraints as an alternative energy-disadvantaged, low-lying island city-state. However, we are committed to fully implementing our obligations under the Paris Agreement and supporting the multilateral process to advance global climate action.

Since the summit, Slovenia adopted the Framework for Long-Term Climate Policy "Slovenia and Healthy Planet". Within the framework, the National Energy Climate Act was adopted, while the project Decarbonising Slovenia through Transition towards Circular Economy and the Long-term Climate Strategy are to be adopted by the end of this year, setting a goal for Slovenia to be climate neutral by 2050.

Despite the slowdown caused by the pandemic, the United Arab Emirates has maintained the timeline of its clean energy projects with the launch of the first peaceful nuclear reactor in the Arab region, and the contract award for a 2 GW solar plant that will be the world’s largest once completed. The winning bid for the project broke the world record for the lowest solar power generation cost at 1.35 US cents per kilowatt-hour. Currently under development is the Mohammed Bin Rashid Solar Park, set to become the largest single-site solar farm in the world with a capacity of 5 GW in 2030. In addition, the country is implementing a nation-wide multi-sectoral climate adaptation plan and finalising its first climate law.

In a year that should have been a game changer for global climate action, the COVID-19 crisis threatens to jeopardize efforts to meet mid- and long-term climate commitments. Consequently, mobilising efforts that aim to keep climate action on track, such as the convening of the Climate Moment event, are more important than ever.

The COVID-19 crisis has laid bare the unsustainable nature of our economic growth model and of our relationship with nature. It has on the other hand given us the opportunity to build back a greener and more resilient world by transforming the way we live, produce and consume.

Despite setbacks, 2020 must remain the year of action and ambition, when countries submit new or revised NDCs. Looking towards COP26 in Glasgow (November 2021), we must keep the momentum by enhancing ambitious climate actions, tackling the climate crisis and environmental degradation, including through our recovery from the pandemic. Climate multilateralism can and must work. If we want our children and grandchildren to have a future, there is no turning back, no alternative to success of COP26.

The members of the Green Group call for ambitious actions and means of implementation to be adopted next year in Glasgow. At the same time, we also use this opportunity to reiterate our collective commitment to continue raising awareness about the importance of promoting international dialogue on climate and other environmental issues.

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