

***“Climate Crisis and Social Dialogue; towards a Sustainable Transition”***

**International Conference, 27 June 2022, Athens, Greece**

**Brief Presentation of Mr. R. Henriquez, Director and Secretary-General of the ECS of Curaçao**

**Second session: The role of social dialogue and civil society engagement in policy making?**

Good afternoon to all,

Calistera,

With protocol being served and considering the brief time period that was given to us for this second session, I will immediately proceed, with your permission, with my presentation,

To set the stage for this, allow me, Mister President, honorable Members of the Council, distinguished guests

and esteemed colleagues, to quote UN Secretary General, Mister ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, who on the occasion of the celebration of International Mother Earth Day, on April, 22, of this year, stated the following:

And I quote:

"We have proven that together, we can tackle monumental challenges. And the right to a healthy environment is gaining traction. But we need to do much more. And much faster. Specially to avert climate catastrophe."

[end quote]

It is obvious that the UN chief, emphasized, in general terms, not only the need for urgent and immediate action to avoid an environmental calamity of epic proportions with devastating consequences for us all, who inhabit this small planet, but he acknowledged and underlined as well Men's ability, willingness, courage and determination to, in a collective matter, when the stakes are high, take

concrete action. Implicitly UN-Secretary General Guterres pointed out that to a large extent our problem of climate change is man-made and therefore can be solved by men. And [in the words of the late American President JFK] men can be as big as he wants. No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings. Men's reason and spirit have often solved the seemingly unsolvable and we believe they can do it again.

Mr. president,

Esteemed audience,

To make our world safe, climate resilient and sustainable for our children and future generations, requires not only determination but also vision of rational men on what concrete path to take. Leadership and sincere cooperation between men and nations, as well as the ability to efficiently remove obstacles that stand in the way of real and effective implementation of what already has been convened on a multilateral level, in order to save this fragile planet we call our home. I'm talking about a genuine commitment of our generation

to planet earth. A commitment that enables future generations to grow and to hope and to build a better life for their children.

As some of you may know, Small Island Development States, SIDS, have long been recognized as being particularly at risk to climate change. These nations are often described as being on the front lines of climate change or as hot spots of climate change.

SIDS have, therefore, been quite active in calling attention to their high vulnerability to climate change and have played a leading role in advocating for stronger ambition to limit global warming through the UN Framework Convention on Climate change.

Coming from a Small Island Development State myself, the island of Curacao in the Southern Caribbean, I can assure you that we will maintain that vital leadership role in accordance with the Samoa Pathway of 2014, in which it has been widely acknowledged by all SIDS worldwide that sea-level rise and other adverse impacts of climate change continue to pose a significant risk to us and our

efforts to achieve sustainable development. For many of us it represents also the gravest of threats to our mere survival and viability.

On the basis of that recognition, we in Curaçao reaffirm the importance of engaging a broad range of stakeholders at the global, regional, subregional, national, and local levels, I'm talking specifically about our international and regional partners, our government, the scientific community, private businesses, workers representatives and civil society at large.

Therefore, Mr. President, distinguished audience, it is with pride that I can state that recently, just a couple of weeks ago, the Curaçao Climate Change Platform has been officially installed. In this platform government, unions, employers, scientists and other relevant groups in the civil society are represented, all in accordance with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The mission of the Curaçao Climate Change Platform is: to facilitate a scientific and evidence-based platform where expertise related to the adverse impacts of

climate change is combined, to formulate mitigation and adaptation strategies for Curaçao.

The long-term outcomes of the aforementioned Platform are: Increased use of new technologies and renewable energies sources to reduce greenhouse gases and realize a neutral footprint.

Relevant for this international conference especially during this decade labeled as the United Nations decade of ocean science for sustainable development, is that Curaçao will in the long term have in its territorial waters an underwater spaceship to do scientific research called Proteus. This underwater spaceship will be built by Fabien Cousteau, the grandson of the famous French oceanographic Jacques Cousteau. Mr. Fabian Cousteau is convinced that by doing scientific research on oceans as the biggest body on the planet, it will contribute in the end to mitigating climate change. The research will focus on life under sea. The location of this spaceship, Curaçao, was chosen, a.o. due to the fact that the coral reefs around our island are very accessible, it is an ideal marine research environment with many accessible depths.

Mr. President,

Distinguished audience,

In conclusion, I want to state explicitly that I completely agree with the Prime-Minister of Barbados, her excellency misses Mia Motley who emphasized the need for a collective effort from all countries and people to save our planet and the faith of humanity, during her historical speech at the COP-26, which was held on November 3<sup>rd</sup> **2021** in Glasgow, Scotland. For making the necessary transitions to effectively mitigate the devastating effects of climate change immediately, active involvement of all actors concerned in the codesigning of mitigation policies will ensure effective implementation. An inclusive transition, in which social dialogue as tool can be applied, is in my view a precondition to achieve result-oriented goals that guaranty climate resilience and sustainability.

I thank you, Efcharistó polý