



Keynote statement

By

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**“Adaptation cannot wait: a call for accelerated
resilience building during recovery efforts”**

at the UNFCCC June Momentum

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Virtual meeting by Microsoft Teams

Thank you, Madam Moderator.

Madam Chair of the SBI,

Distinguished Representatives of the COP25 and COP26 Presidencies,

Madam Chair of the LDC Expert Group,

Distinguished Panel Members,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for your invitation to address this meeting of the June Momentum.

Yours is an essential initiative. Yes, we went through and still go through a top health priority but we must maintain traction for climate action.

As the first studies show, and some of us have known it for a while, you cannot separate health from the environment and climate.

Yes, we have been struck by the most severe global health crisis of this century to date. And it may well also trigger the most acute economic crisis of our lifetime.

And at the same time, the global climate crisis continues to unfold.

We are just at the onset of the hurricane season. Capacities are stretched to limits, well we already have the example of Cyclone Amphan and how it hit Bangladesh where at the same time the number of coronavirus cases is escalating sharply.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its manifold impacts and some yet to come, drive home in a very visible way the multiple vulnerabilities of the least developed countries, small island developing states and landlocked developing countries.

Fragility is indeed the word.

These nations have the most fragile health systems.

Their economies – often commodity – or tourism dependent – have been severely impacted by declining demand, global shutdowns and the massive decline in international trade and transport.

Many were already highly indebted before the pandemic.

Declining tax revenues limit the fiscal space available for stimulus measures.

Scarce domestic resources are being diverted from national SDG implementation towards plans to address emergency needs.

The virus has also impacted the process of accessing funds and implementing adaptation activities.

History has taught us how fragility disrupts often to points of no return. We cannot just be by standers - this situation must be reversed.

Global efforts at addressing the impacts of COVID-19 in the most vulnerable countries must be viewed through a holistic lens.

It is about building resilience, and it must have building climate change resilience at its core.

For example, the FAO has highlighted the risk to food security and nutrition in the wake of the pandemic.

Supply chains are already disrupted, we see the increases in food loss and waste, especially of perishables, as well as labour shortages due to movement restrictions. Add to that already challenging environmental and climatic conditions. Country-level policy responses to face the crisis must factor in climate resilience considerations.

It is more essential than ever to issue a strong call for maintaining and accelerating and even increasing levels of ODA, and especially for adaptation to climate change.

The National Adaptation Plans, even pre-pandemic, serve as the central vehicle for adaptation planning and implementation of adaptation solutions.

The important work of their preparation and roll-out cannot be put on hold. Just as the virus did not wait for us to be ready, the climate will also not do this.

There is much that can be done, there is much that must be done and being in the midst of these multiple and overlapping crises is not an excuse for inaction.

The LDCs and SIDS have fundamental obstacles to overcome to effectively formulate and implement their NAPS.

These obstacles will not miraculously go away, but run the risk of being compounded as countries prioritize recovery efforts.

To avoid this, national stimulus packages should, to the extent possible, seek simultaneously to build resilience.

The NAP offers that tool, that immediate opportunity for the inclusion of climate resilience considerations into COVID-19 recovery efforts.

We should find ways to advance and learn from innovative solutions we are currently practicing, such as advancing actions through virtual means.

The role is equally valid in countries efforts at resilient recovery from COVID19.

The UNFCCC Open NAP initiative could not have been more relevant at this challenging time. It is grounded on the principle of crowd sourcing and collaboration, including virtually, in supporting the LDCs to formulate effective adaptation plans.

In addition to producing plans and submitting Adaptation Communications, including through NDCs later this year, there are several other important steps we can take.

Time is definitely not on our side. This cannot be business as usual.

We cannot afford to have the usual sequence of events like spend several years doing new assessments, new planning documents, another few years to write proposals for implementation, then another year to once projects are approved to arrange implementation modalities, then eventually implementation on the ground.

It is about action and NOW, COVID-19 has shown us the need and urgency in doing vertical integration.

I have emphasized the need for shortening the number of years needed from project proposal to results at various forums, including as a member of the GCF SIDS evaluation advisory group.

I have also emphasized the limited capacity in SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs to prepare projects. The COVID pandemic has highlighted what we already knew – the urgency of strengthening national capacities, so we are not dependent on international consultants.

While the internet offers remote-working solutions and the means of streamlining our processes, we must make sure that we bridge the digital divide, and not allow it to stifle what we can do.

Supporting countries will require innovating, not simply going back to business as usual.

Given the urgency, we need a more creative, a different approach to providing support is needed.

I call on everyone, including the panel to offer the vulnerable countries hope through creative and innovative solutions that can be put to work.

We cannot accept delayed delivery and the shifting of outputs. Peoples' lives are at stake and so is our credibility!

We can do this together and we must work with all countries to make real progress. Let us agree on concrete targets and get to work.

Thank you.
