

**Commonwealth Secretary-General
High-Level Statement for COP28
December 9, 2023**

Excellencies.

Every achievement in human history has been enabled by the earth's stable climate.

The breakdown of that stability - with extremes of heat, drought, storms, floods and fires the like of which we have never seen, and challenges for humanity the like of which we have never known - is our responsibility.

We are locked in a war with the planet we all share, with devastating consequences for our people, prosperity, peace and prospects.

As a direct result, the most vulnerable nations in the Commonwealth and across the world face being consumed by rising seas or drowned by debt.

Since 1989, Commonwealth Leaders have called for global action.

Our small states have been at the forefront of the Loss & Damage breakthrough.

And today, their calls reverberate with an urgency which cannot be ignored.

Decisive action for systems transformation, rooted in the sharpest honesty about where we are, where we need to be, and how we get there, is the only way forward.

We must reduce emissions and accelerate the energy transition.

We must restore the natural world - ocean, land and air - because our precious planet is our greatest asset and ally.

And donors must keep their climate finance promises to the vulnerable - investing in the health of our planet and all our peoples.

If we can achieve this - *and our history shows us that we are capable of the most extraordinary things* - then there is still, just, enough time.

Not only to deliver humanity from the worst effects of climate change, but to catalyse a brighter, more sustainable future for everyone, everywhere.

It falls to us - here and now - to make that happen, and there is no time left to waste.