



16th Raúl Prebisch Lecture

UNCTAD, Geneva, 10 September 2019

INVISIBLE YET INDISPENSABLE

by The Hon. Ms. Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados

16th Raúl Prebisch Lecture

10 September 2019, from 4 to 6 p.m.
by **The Honorable Mia Amor Mottley**
Prime Minister of Barbados
Palais des Nations, Geneva



Invisible Yet Indispensable

If ever there was a time when the world needed an international order to harness global efforts to tackle challenges too great for any one nation, it is today. Climate change is not a theory, nor prospect, it is the lived reality for an increasing number. Small island states, coastal and low-lying states are on the front line. But the world order has been fundamentally undermined by the adhoc exercise of power over universal principle. The more international institutions are democratic and treaty based, the more they have been stripped of power and funding. Today power resides in self-selected groups of the large, and not just political power but the power of business too. Most countries feel vulnerable and unprotected. But the crumbling of the international order will hurt the large and powerful just as much as the weak and small: no country can stand up to climate change and related global threats on their own.

It is time to reinvent the international order. One that builds local resilience as well as promoting global competitiveness, for it will not stand if many of its members feel invisible and dispensable.

Will be streamed live on
Facebook.com/unctad



Watch the full speech video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-LfqabPjNI>



INVISIBLE YET INDISPENSABLE
by Ms. Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister, Barbados
(unofficial transcription based on delivery)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-LfqabPjNI>

Good afternoon all. I am told that in Geneva you kiss three times and I am told that since my name is Mia Amor, I have no choice but to spread love.

Excellencies, all,

And there are really too many faces in this room that I recognize now. And I begin therefore to think that I have met a lot of people and I have really been spreading a lot of love.

But a pleasant good afternoon to each of you. Let me say at the outset that I really am humbled to have been invited to give this lecture. The sixteenth lecture to honour one of the great development thinkers of the twentieth century. I am equally deeply humbled to be only the second woman to deliver this lecture and particularly so the first person from the Caribbean.

With respect to those who have been accorded the pleasure – and you heard just now some of the names – I almost feel like a groupie listening to some of the best bands that I have ever enjoyed in life and therefore must confess to being totally humbled by the invitation. Because the thinkers who have given this lecture before are those who have inspired us to greater heights in public life across the developing world, I am also doing so, conscious that the region from which I come, is unique – because it is a place that represents all the world's great civilizations, living in harmony. Living in peace.

It is an example to the rest of the world that wants more and more to be divided by “isms” and schisms, and religious divisions, that make absolutely no sense. But for those who want to hear and for those of us who are from our region, we have a story to tell. And that story is how different people can live together. But it is premised first and foremost on the respect for each and everyone, and on the understanding of the dignity of each human being.

I do not believe that there is a region that pays greater respect to social justice and to fairness than the Caribbean region – and I say so without fear of contradiction, even if with clear bias.

But I understand, that for many, we are either a wonderful place to have a holiday – and let me tell you that is true– Prime Minister [Allen] Chastanet [Saint Lucia] is here, and he will agree with me on that. But equally for too many, we are invisible – and that is of concern.

Whether we share that invisible nature with the Pacific Islands and other small States is a matter for debate for some. But I have come here today to tell you that even if for many we are invisible, we are not indispensable.

We are not dispensable.

We have a story to tell, and we have an experience to share. But let me start. I am not an economist. I am a lawyer, and by profession, we are familiar with disclaimers. So, I issue that disclaimer upfront. I am not a trade specialist, but I am in the business of development. I am on a lifelong journey representing people, empowering them and franchising them, giving them opportunity, giving them



voice, when they never had. And when it was taken from them, giving them back voice, giving people a presence and highlighting them when others around either refuse to see them or cannot see them.

And you may ask why. Why? Because, simply, it is the right thing to do. Not just politically but most importantly, morally. And moral leadership, my friends, matters.

Moral leadership matters today in a world that is simply too similar to a world that existed almost 100 years ago.

A world that bred anxiety and fear then, as it is breeding anxiety and fear today – this is eerily so. Because in spite of the passage of a world war, in spite of an atomic bomb, in spite of all other kinds of losses. The Great Depression. In spite of the positive aspects of our progress, the settlement of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in spite of the independence movement.

We come today to find ourselves trespassing on ground that ought best to be left in our history and not to become part of our future. And to this we have added the insidious threats of terrorism. And, indeed, worse than that: the existential threat of climate change.

Today we have persons questioning whether our independence truly is what it was promised to be, or, whether we are now being subject to forms of colonization that hitherto existed in our history and battles we thought we had long put behind us.

So, then I say to you that moral leadership matters. Because moral leadership recognizes that basic right of each human being to be accorded first, and always, that decency and that dignity. And that recognition demands of us a better understanding that each of us is needed to make this world a better place. And to make a better life, for people, whose voices are not heard and whom we do not see.

And if we recall and place it in the context of our own body, each of us has a role to play. The smallest bone in our body is in our ear, and without it we cannot hear. It is as important to us as all of the other larger bones which give us mobility, and which allow us to do the things that we want to do. So that small or large, we have a role to play and a voice to be heard.

For those who like reggae, the last album to come out from Third World three weeks ago has a wonderful song called *They Must Hear Us* and it could not come at a better time than for those of us who are now demanding that our voices be heard and that our presence be felt.

But just as we assured and rejected, completely, slavery and colonialism and imperialism. Just as we find it abhorrent to dare to contemplate far less to support subjugating people and removing freedom and choice from them, we must also recognize that true freedom requires change in the structural imbalances in power and wealth in our myths.

Otherwise it becomes what? Freedom in name alone. Let us reflect on it.

In 1945, when the United Nations was established – the United States of America, Ghana, Kenya, Fiji, Jamaica, Guyana, India – we didn't all stand on a level playing field. We came to that point in time from different places with different strengths and with different levels of poverty.

Prior to 1945, the extraction of wealth and the imposition of dominance in our world, was not only tolerated, but in official circles it was applauded. Nothing was done to correct that imbalance.



Indeed, it was enshrined, as we see in the permanent five who get to sit on the Security Council. There was a category who sat there, and the rest who remained here.

And the structural imbalances in our power and in our wealth therefore became enshrined, rather than us seeking to create that level playing field before declaring that each of us was equal to each other as human beings or as countries.

A global community that failed to appreciate the horror of colonialism also failed to recognize that the taxation which was imposed on countries such as ours to extract wealth, for decades, or in some instances centuries, to benefit persons and entities thousands of miles away and whose only sense of entitlement resulted from their might and their power and their ability to subjugate. I could refer to Haiti and its payment of a portion of its customs dues to the Government of France after it declared its independence.

Or I can refer to what is little known.

The 4.5 per cent tax imposed by the British on Barbados and the Leeward Islands for production from 1663 to 1838, extracting for the benefit of families listed by the House of Commons, and debates, and not for the benefit of those living on the 166m² of Barbados or on the other Leeward Islands.

Their actions were not rooted in moral legitimacy. Nor were they resting upon the tenets on which our spirituality and our humanity is supposed to be based. Nor do they accord with the spirit of natural justice. These things were simply wrong and unacceptable.

And while the world community eventually accepted that – after millions lost their lives – that these wrongs ought to be corrected, it did so without insisting that there had to be meaningful change. It did so, without recognizing that merely to afford people and countries' present and future rights, under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, would be insufficient to transform their lives. And this is not different from the point asserted by Professor Stiglitz when he delivered this lecture, indicating that simply to guarantee macroeconomic stability is insufficient to assure development to the millions of people who need development.

The disability caused by the extraction of wealth and the subjugation of our people, bred a persistent poverty, to use language familiar to the Caribbean lexicon. That persistent poverty, regrettably, still endures for some of our population. Unless the fundamental obstacle to our development therefore is addressed, I fear that that imbalance of power and wealth in the global community of nations shall remain.

Let us not be shy to confront it. Middle-income countries refused today to be allowed access to development aid and assistance, purely on the basis of arbitrary determinations of per capita and GDP [gross domestic product] formulations that bear no relationship to the reality of our lives. And even when money is promised in the midst of disasters, money promised, and money delivered, are two totally different experiences.

We must not be naive in appreciating that the head start given the developed world, to build their countries and to build out their industrial base and work, was done on wealth extracted from millions of people across the developing world.

It is a difficult conversation. But as I say to my people all of the time, “You cannot be mature as an adult or mature as a country and not have difficult conversations”.



Now where does that leave us?

And before I move on, I am conscious that one of the longest times I spent in this city, was on the eve of the preparation for the World Conference against Racism in Durban in 2001. When I came on behalf of my country and we met with virtually all of the regions, and a large number of countries, and then Mary Robinson who was in charge, it was clear to us that as we met that week, there was a determination to provide the apologies and the reparations to the Jewish people for the Holocaust. But that the rest of us who went through the greatest persecution...

Words escape me at this point, in time to describe the middle passage that it remains unacknowledged as one of the gravest crimes against humanity by those who ought to move on and say, "Sorry, and let us recompense."

But where does that leave us?

In today's world, independence in name alone – without options for development, for transforming and transitioning the lives of our people – is as hollow an experience as possible.

It breeds cynicism among our people, especially our younger people, who have the same aspirations as young people in any other part of the world. And who cannot appreciate why they are being denied the opportunities simply because their countries cannot afford to build, and build back, and build, and build back, as I will talk about very shortly, because of being on a frontline to a war that we did not start.

What is our other reality?

That we continue to fail to access markets on fair terms, that we fail to have, for example, correspondent banking services, because we are either simply too small to be seen, or too small to matter to some? It matters not that the absence of that correspondent banking will cause our countries, and our regions even, and our people, to be cut off and to be quarantined, just as lepers were in centuries past, from a global community, as we seek to buy goods and services from outside our borders. How will our people trade if they do not have access to a banking system that allows them to transmit and to pay for services and goods across the borders?

It is pure, unadulterated hypocrisy – and at worst, contempt and insensitivity, as to what happens to human beings who happen not to live within the borders of the developed world.

The truth is that de-risking, as practiced by the large regional and global banks, is simply a commercial banking decision, based on an unwillingness to exercise effort to go through the process to determine who ought to, and who ought not to, benefit. And a determination that they are not prepared to make that effort, because it cuts into their profits at the end of the day. It is a decision certainly not rooted in moral legitimacy or moral leadership.

But let me say that is their right. It is their right as a private entity so to do, for they can pursue their own narrow self-interest. Although there are now debates arising again as to whether the maximization of shareholder value is to be the determination and the principle objective of companies, or whether they ought not to do that which centuries ago companies – were set up to do: to be able to deal with stakeholders across the board. Stakeholders range from employees to customers to investors to directors to Governments to consumers.

But it is not really their fundamental duty, even if I acknowledge that, because the duty is on countries and on international bodies, such as this [one/ United Nations]... and others, to question



and to urge reversal of these insensitive policies that, very often, have their origin at some middle level in some Government, or some international body, not appreciating the consequences or the range of reach. Or of the determination, that you should seek to tick all of these boxes, as if you were taking an exam paper that has no meaningful consequences upon the lives of ordinary people.

How does this world expect to ring-fence entire regions of people from trade and commerce? This issue is an issue that I submit is fully ripe for the engagement of this august institution, that founded itself on doing right by the developing world of this globe.

Bullying on a playground cannot become the standard or norm for the behaviour of international community or countries.

I say to you that this recognition of the powerlessness that is foisted on us against these faceless decisions that inhibit our ability to move forward with certainty and confidence, is not new. And that is why I started my thoughts with you, from a time and age passed, because you need to understand that for us it is the same attitude, but in a different dress and in a different garb and with a different volume and with a different accent.

It appears differently. And, just as with the passage of time, wars look different; just as with the passage of time, we continue to look at things foisted on us, the appearance today is just different. But we must be discerning enough to recognize it when it presents itself.

The powerful example of those in a post-World War II environment, those fighting for sovereignty and for independence, for really what simply was the right to choose for their people, and to build lives and to build platforms for development – what this organization [UNCTAD] was formed to do – those causes and those objectives inspire us still, as they must.

It is this tradition of intellectual leadership that we stand upon, and it is best exemplified by the work and advocacy of the man whose name we honour today, in this lecture series. It was a battle engaged by persons like Prime Minister Gandhi and Prime Minister Michael Manley, who sought to frame then a new international economic order, only to have it confronted by the might and shouting of the Washington Consensus... to invalidate the moral rectitude of the leadership which they sought to exhibit in their time.

What happened? The thesis that inspired the independence movement and the new international economic order and the establishment of UNCTAD, was developed, and refined, and expanded, and challenged, and refined again.

Those who espouse the Washington Consensus, with all of the might and dogma that they had, sought to obliterate the very foundation of courage and leadership exhibited by those public servants politicians and academics who sought simply to seek equity and fairness and development for citizens who had never been the beneficiary of the same in the countries in which they live.

And that is where we thank all who gave these lectures from this platform for their courage. Because there was a period of time when their voice sounded like the voice of a pariah, rather than the voice of moral leadership in our world.

But President Obama has famously told us that history does not come in a straight line. It truly does not. And, hence therefore, we have to move on, conscious that concepts such as import substitution – so championed by Raúl Prebisch himself – became a thing to be scorned and to be eschewed.



Without, my friends, wanting to sound as though I am clutching to an age past, I ask us simply to understand and appreciate the need for food security, to which I will revert later, and therefore the need for protection of production, if we are truly to be able to guarantee food security to islands that are cut off by water; and for whom logistics of supply become challenged, particularly when the entire neighbourhood is challenged by the very same climate systems that prevent the movement of ships and planes.

I say to you, that we all know that markets are not perfect.

Whether we go back to Karl Polanyi in 1939 and his great book *The Great Transformation*. Or whether we come forward to today, we know that markets left to their own devices will favour simply the mighty, and only occasionally, the lucky.

It is against this background, therefore, that I want to share with you why we need moral leadership yet again in today's world. It is against this background that we need to have moral leadership to guarantee voice and relevance and decency for the countries and peoples of the world – the countries that remain invisible, regrettably, for those who meet to plan out the future in their own image and not in the interests of the principles of the universal declarations that we agreed to in 1945.

Why do we need it? We needed it when Mahatma Gandhi and the other freedom fighters of the world fought against the tyranny of subjugation and colonialism.

You know what happened? The world recognized the moral legitimacy of those battles. We needed it when Marcus Mosiah Garvey and Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, and many others fought against the scourge of racism, and apartheid and its cancerous impact on the lives of millions and millions of human beings, equally invisible. But guess what? The world got it, even if belatedly so, that their moral legitimacy was correct.

But I ask you today, what will it take, for us to get the mighty of the world to protect an entire world against today's existentialist threat to our own survival, as human beings living on this planet? What will it take to keep us safe from the ravages of terrorism? Or from the cyberthreats that so insidiously stalk our landscapes? Safe from the guns being used against innocent people in places that are not war zones but are supposed to be safe, on a Saturday afternoon, or a Sunday morning worshipping, or a Friday worshipping?

What will it take to admit of the humanity that is needed to facilitate, even as we may want to regulate it, but to facilitate the movement of people, now called “migrants” – and not just the movement of money, appropriately called “foreign direct investment”?

What will it take for us to summon the political will? When will it be formed within countries and across international institutions to do what is right to create the policy space – not just to handle aid but to create the policy space – that will allow our countries to plan with dignity, to protect what we have and to propel our people to prosperity?

Policy space and regulations that allow for competitiveness. Policy flexibility will be of minimal cost to much of the developed world, but of tremendous, tremendous advantage to those of us requesting it, in respect of our ability to secure development for our people in a dignified manner.

For us in many instances, the inability to guarantee that kind of access and policy flexibility is what leads to life-and-death decisions. I must tell you, that for many of us who are invisible, regulatory



tyranny is the new weapon that is being used to maintain dominance in today's world and enhance surreptitiously, what is really competitiveness for a few.

Rules are made and changed without participation in many instances. The global community settles on one entity to be the police and body, while global tax governance and others, then usurp unto themselves that role of policing and naming and shaming without reference to the negative consequences that ensue for those who are now to be attacked – not because we have breached the principles but because we dare to be successful in what we do.

We can play football too. We can play cricket – in fact we used to be the best at cricket, and we will be there again.

But what we cannot do is play a game whose rules are changing on us!

Changing in the middle of the night.

Changing without being communicated to us.

I started this speech by telling you I am a lawyer. And the rules against natural justice, run against that type of behaviour.

The problem is that there is no global court to appeal to, in a way that we would go to court to defend the rights of individual citizens. And therefore, we amble along, fighting as we must, to sustain a population on new industries encouraged by the very same people who now seek to rule and outlaw those industries in today's world because of that success.

Countries cannot sign up equally to international treaties and charters, and commitments and declarations, and then treat them as if they're not meaningful or real. That they only apply to others, not to them. Or when it is not inconvenient for them as powerful nations, they will abide by them. Ask yourself, why there is defunding of many major international organizations that appear and want to be democratic?

And there is tremendous money for those who are prepared to succumb themselves to the dictates of the powerful and the few. It is a question that must be asked and an answer that causes great anxiety among those of us who want to see fairness in today's world.

The reform of international institutions – not just international financial institutions that really are overdue for it, but equally the United Nations and other international bodies – is a task that must be completed. It's been unresolved for simply too long and the time for action is now.

The worthiness in pursuit of this reform, we all know, is unquestionable. But yet it remains decades after unresolved. We need to put it to bed. We need to put to bed these things that we have been fighting for that are legitimate and worthy so we can get on to the other issues that are truly confronting us.

A few months ago in this same building, I believe, I addressed the International Labour Organization on its centenary celebrations and the worthy subjects of discussion, like the future work, and with ownership, and where are we with respect to artificial intelligence, or where are we with the rise of robotics and other disruptive technologies.



How do we prepare ourselves for a world that, when I was a child I watched “The Jetsons” cartoon, and we saw flying cars and we never thought that it would happen in our lifetime? Now I come to Europe, and I see stories in that same week of flying cars being tested.

But we who are invisible, do not have the luxury to leapfrog into those debates because we are too busy simply trying to survive and to eke out existences and to fight battles that should be long put behind us.

The problems that the world faces today can only be defeated multilaterally. The problems that the world faces today can only be defeated through multilateralism.

No one nation can defeat climate change. No one nation can defeat international terrorism and financial crime. These can only be defeated by a strong international order. But an international order, you and I both know – like the chain that I wear around my neck – is only as strong as the weakest link. It is only as strong as the smallest among us. Only as strong as we are prepared to account for the invisible. And hence I say to you, that smallness still represents a group of people, who are indispensable.

In the same way that weak links attract financial crime, an international order that is not inclusive, not strongly rooted in fairness and moral legitimacy, will fail to halt and reverse climate change.

In the most global of battles, all of us of sound mind and strong body and capacity are needed to fight. I fundamentally believe that like with everything else in life – and my people hear me say it all the time – you must claim ground, secure it and move forward again. For those who want to know how to win all [Government] seats you must claim ground, secure it and move forward again.

In my country, the older people would say, in good Bajan dialect: “*One-one blow does kill ole cow*”. One blow at a time to secure what you want. Others tell you about one step at a time.

As I said earlier, we do not always move in a straight line. In fact, those who doubt me should come to jump in carnival or crop-over and you see how we dance because we skip, three steps forward and two steps back, three steps forward and two steps back. That is how we move. That is how we dance.

So that what we really need to come to that movement is collective partnerships – new voices. To inspire and to influence because it is clear that the current construct is not carrying us where we need to go – and we need to set priorities and to work assiduously to make them happen. What are those priorities to transform our countries and to work to bring development to our people, in the best traditions of Raul Prebisch and the others, who have spoken on this platform since?

I want to share with you a few things that I believe to be important and critical as we move forward. Because, while it is important to know where we have come from, and while it is important to understand the mental construct that is seeking to subjugate us in a post-independence era, it is also important for us to claim new ground, to secure it and to move forward, to recognize that we run not a sprint but a relay race.

And as I reflected and read all of the lectures [given] over the last 37 years, it became clear to me that history truly is not made in a straight line, that in many ways, the more things change, regrettably the more they have remained the same.

The Talmud says that we have a duty to try. We may not complete the task, but neither are we at liberty to refrain from trying. And little by little, the metaphor of skipping, dancing three steps



forward, two steps back, three steps forward one step back, is the greatest lesson that we can have as we seek as public servants and leaders to be able to transform the lives of our people.

The bottom line therefore my friends, is what are those priorities that I would like us to look at.

The very first one would be one that as I said earlier to you would be dear to Mr. Prebisch's heart. That of food security which would be inextricably linked to import substitution. Today, trade policy with its focus on the removal of local protection, reliance on transport logistics and multinational corporate ownership of technology, stands in conflict truly with climate policy and its focus on building local resilience and food security.

[Hurricane] *Dorian* passed over Barbados in a few hours, but it pinned down the Bahamas for days. Imagine, if *Dorian* had hit Miami and central Florida, as well or instead of, the logistic hub for the supply of food for the Caribbean region would have been completely disrupted.

And however much you may say, "Well, we will transfer it", you are going to take another week or two, or three or four, before you can sit and get, at the very least, that logistics of play back in place again. And what happens to those who may equally have been affected by the same weather system, and for whom, therefore, there is no form of normalcy with respect to the provision of food and supplies?

We need a bridge between trade and climate policy. Food security in the age of devastating climate change is real.

When I met with my own farmers, and I asked them to look at boosting production, and perhaps, in undertaking the same efforts that were taken during World War II, when legislation was passed to require every farmer to plant a certain percentage of their land in food to guarantee that our people could eat during a war.

They said that they would love to, but the only problem is that when there is no hurricane or no disruption of supply, they cannot meet the costs of imported produce. Their skills are simply too small – and their ability to guarantee fresh food and vegetables to our people therefore is compromised as a result.

We are not seeking a return to autarky.

We are not seeking a reversal of international trade. We know that trade plays a vital role in ending poverty. Indeed, there is no other set of countries in the world that is more open than small islands. There is none. We are not just open, to use the language of another Barbadian, "we are hyper-open".

There is no other set of countries as exposed to the shifts in international consumption and production than us. It is equally a source of our strength. But it is a source of our vulnerability.

Brexit, I contend, has affected Barbados more than it has affected Bradford.

Our exports and our imports are huge multiples of our economies – and often we export everything that we produce – and, regrettably, import everything that we consume.

In that context, my friends, therefore I submit to you that we need a reorientation of trade policy that supports both global trade and local resilience, that allows a resilient minimum to be secured first, because without that resilient minimum, our populations are at risk to the vagaries of all of the



worse aspects of climate change, and all of those things that undermine development from crime and terrorism, the lack of social cohesion.

We need an orientation – a reorientation of trade policy – that also supports non-discrimination, but recognizes that in an age of diabetes, with the explosion of other chronic non-communicable diseases that are killing our people, that trade in agriculture is as much a health issue as anything else. That fresh food is not just an issue of resilience against hurricanes, but it is resilience too against the ravages of poor nutrition and against spiralling health costs.

What is the sense of summits at the United Nations General Assembly to fight chronic non-communicable diseases last year, and this year again, and yet we cannot treat to the issue of a trade policy that supports the kind of food security that we need to help us, and the kind of trade policy that we need, to protect the health of our nation?

Yes, we do need a revival of the nexus of trade and development, and I hope that as we meet – and I invite all of you to come to Barbados next October to UNCTAD 15 – that we can put in sharp focus trade and climate change and development for all of us, of which food security is but one of the components.

But I also want to talk to you about the blue economy. Because as we meet in Barbados next year, we want to add the blue economy as truly the next frontier. And many of your organizations have begun to recognize that this is absolutely critical. Any focus on economic sustainability for us as islands must bring in the sharp focus the blue economy the value of the seas. Be it from fisheries, the extraction of minerals, the absorption of carbon, all of this adds materially to the economic base of all, but especially small island States.

I like to tell people that Barbados is 166m² of land. But our marine space is 400 times that of our land space, and for us to ignore the potential of that marine space and to focus only on the land space, would be to defy rational behaviour because it means that that which ought to be sustaining and securing you, is being ignored.

Those who saw the land only as a production base for the extraction of wealth to send overseas, may be forgiven for that kind of behaviour. But those of us who have the responsibility for the destiny of our people have a duty first and foremost to protect our seas, to conserve our seas, to protect our coral reefs, to protect our fisheries, and then to see how best we can use it to add economic value to our overall production as nations.

The value of this blue economy therefore comes not just from saying so, it requires recognition, but, yes, measurement. In measurement there is a deficiency that we have in being able to translate into the cases that need to be made such that we speak the language of others who only see things in raw economic terms and statistics – and who do not therefore appreciate why this adds value to us.

Prime Minister Chastanet is famous for making the point that if we were to treat the Caribbean Sea as one group of nations, and to truly extract its value, we would then be able to see what it is worth to each and every body, from the fishers to the cruise ships, to those who yacht, to all who move through. Indeed, his view is really premised upon Norman Manley's view, expressed more than 60 years ago, that the Caribbean Sea must forever represent the patrimony of our people.

So I look forward, therefore, to us grasping this opportunity. Indeed, when we formed the Government one year ago, I appointed, for the first time, a Minister of Maritime Affairs and Blue



Economy, because unless we maximize the opportunities afforded us, we will not be going anywhere.

In our own case as well, our blue economy is being challenged by untreated runoffs into the ocean, by the acidification, by the bleaching and death of coral reefs, which are impacting fisheries, and most recently of all – and most perhaps horrifically of all for those who love the beach, as I do – by seagrass and weed that are literally strangling the inner waters of our nations, from Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados in the south, to the Gulf States in the north; from the Bahamas in the east; to Mexico in the west.

Yet there is no single effort by the global community to treat to this awful, awful development and to allow us to understand fully how we can confront it, how we can stop it and how we can make sure that those who have suffered already, economically from the inability to ply their trades on the course, can be compensated as we move forward.

There is no immediate pool of funds available to us to do it.

That brings me to the third point: that we need a new colloquium on insurance and investment. Only last Friday, having left the horrors of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas the day before, I spoke to our people and signalled an intention for Barbados to sponsor an investment and insurance colloquium, to begin to understand what we must do.

In a climate disaster, insurance mechanisms build budget support fast, but what is the reality today?

The resources are simply too small to cover the damage that has taken place. And self-insurance cannot work for those of us on the frontline of climate change. Indeed, those on the frontline will not be able to afford the premiums for the rising and correlated threats of loss and damage caused by climate change. When I spoke to some in the Bahamas, they told me simply that they didn't even have hurricane insurance because it's simply too expensive to be able to afford.

When you look at the pool, certainly of the English-speaking Caribbean within CARICOM [Caribbean Community], it is exceptionally small and incapable therefore of providing the kind of business case that insurance companies would be comfortable in meeting with respect to the offering of insurance for those purposes.

So we need a new settlement where insurance mechanisms that are used to pay out 10 to 50 times more than currently, and the premiums that are paid, I suggest, are contributed by those who have actually caused this climate change, you hear us from our region tell you over and over, we are on the frontline of a battle that we did not start, and it cannot be morally fair for us to have our people pay a premium that they cannot afford that is a result of the actions of others and imposed upon us.

Linking contributions to loss-and-damage funds to those responsible for the stock and growth of greenhouse gases, therefore, will not only provide the financing, but would provide the kind of changed incentives that we need to bring a halt to climate change.

Who feels it, knows it. Those who must pay will alter their behaviour, and if we continue to believe that those who cause it shall get away without payment at all times, it is only a matter of time before they, too, become victims of their own negligent behaviour, even if we are the sacrificial lambs upfront. As long as there is distance between those who suffer from climate change on the front line and those who contributed – and the bottom line is, I regret – climate change will continue.



We can build better, and we must build better to withstand. It is nonsense talking about a Category 5 hurricane now because what is hitting the region really is in the vicinity of Category 8 or 9.

It is expensive, to build for it. Ironically the houses that withstood some of the worst storm surges in the Bahamas were those houses that were built years ago, when a population had to be ready every day of every month, of every year, because there was no global telecommunications warning that something was coming, and that there was no need to get ready because they were always ready and because their houses were built on stilts to accommodate the storm surge moving through.

Or in our own case in Barbados, that our roofs were built as gable or hip roofs that could withstand horrific winds with minimal overhang [that] these roofs had. Such that we were therefore ready for the worst of what came. The problem is that the worst is getting worse, and worse, and worse. And the question must now be, do we need to re-engineer, even if keeping the core tenants of much of that original architecture that had our people ready in a pre-technological age because they simply had to be.

We also need new institutions, such as the one being proposed by Prime Minister Chastanet for the SIDS [Small Island Developing States] Foundation, and other new institutions with new governance structures that will enable these investments to lift countries, regions and cities and not sink them into debt.

The bottom line is, to build back, we have to borrow.

And when we borrow, it is added to our debt to GDP.

And when our debt to GDP rises, our credit rating drops, and then we are unable to meet the basic fundamental demands that normal development requires of us.

There has to be a recognition of being able to isolate that debt, which is necessary to build resilience, or to build back from a climate disaster, as opposed to the normal aspects of development. Because if we don't do it, I can assure you, these small States will not be able to carry the costs of climate disaster, and there will be additional climate refugees in the Caribbean.

Those who say that we never heard about Montserrat and the volcano. Those who say that we did not have any, have never heard about the total evacuation of the residents of Barbuda or what for some, clearly now, is total evacuation in Abaco and other parts of the region that have had partial evacuations like those who suffered from [Hurricanes] *Irma* and *Maria* in 2017.

The gap between those suffering, and those contributing, regrettably, is therefore not closing fast enough. We need to mobilize people, as well, to recognize that it is expensive to put all utilities underground to safeguard our slopes our riverbanks and our coastlines. It is too expensive for us to incur this debt. Our own country's major transformational project for the next decade is called "from roofs to reefs" and it includes being able to rebuild our reefs and to rebuild our roofs because we know that we will pay for a disaster one way or the other. It is just that it is cheaper to pay for it before it happens than after it happens.

The other point that I want us to look at, is that we need to mobilize people to be influencers. to alter the domestic political agenda of many States of the world. Who will do it? I suggest to you that it is primarily the young people and the artists of the world who must lead this effort, to highlight the new manifestations of climate change that are here.



Young people in the Americas recognize that they, too, are vulnerable to hurricanes on the eastern seaboard and in the Gulf States, or to wildfires in the west of the United States of America, or the rising sea levels in Alaska, as glaciers melt, or to the risk of seagrass and weed threatening the beaches, as I talked about earlier, and the businesses in the south and the Gulf States.

They also know that from coast to coast, they are now becoming subject to tropical diseases that hitherto did not exist in their communities, from the West Nile virus, to the recently discussed encephalitis, that has a mortality rate of 30 per cent.

You know, we, too, can turn away people from the borders of our countries. But there is no wall that can be built high enough to turn away mosquitoes.

In 2017, we had two Category 5 hurricanes in two weeks, previously a once-in-thousand-year event.

But yet earlier this year, Mozambique had two cyclones, two or three weeks apart, affecting more than two million persons.

Just the other day, Japan suffered one of the strongest typhoons it ever had on record.

Cyclones and flooding also affected landlocked Malawi.

In Zimbabwe, you talk about both flooding and drought in the same year.

Our brothers and sisters in the Pacific, like us in the Caribbean, are also experiencing sea-level rising, causing coastal flooding, which within a decade could see the Maldives disappear right before our very eyes.

Yesterday, we saw more examples of flooding in the Sudan.

Over in Asia, China has been experiencing an increase in average temperatures, that if the records are correct, would mean that that point 2 to 4 degrees Celsius per decade, is more than what we are trying to halt to allow coral reef countries to survive, or Greenland and the Arctic, and the Antarctic summer sheets, to survive.

We say to the world that we cannot abide more than 1.5 degrees Celsius change, but the world is happy to discuss 2 degrees Celsius, as if we are dispensable because we are invisible.

Europe over the past decade has been experiencing its hottest summers on record – this year, July 2019, being the hottest month on record ever.

Yet on the flip side, the winters are getting colder and more bitter. What of the fires in Brazil? Did we not witness a host president dismiss an entire agenda for G [Group of] 7 countries, in as colourful a way as is possible, so that they could discuss a three-week conflagration in the Amazon, made up by an incredible 2,500 fires?

My mind could contemplate an imagined 5, 10, 50, maybe 100 or 200. But tell me who in here can contemplate 2,500 raging fires in the Amazon? It is believed that in that one set of incidents, we have reversed much of the efforts of the world in seeking to reduce carbon emissions.

And let us not forget, of course, the global crisis of vanishing groundwater, whether it is in Morocco or in Peru. Or in India. Or in Kansas in the United States or indeed in my own Barbados.



Against this reality, not projections, but reality: Younger and younger people will rise up. Our children will rise up. For it is their lives that is being sacrificed on the altar of greater profits and convenience of a few.

Coalitions must be formed and mercifully, technology allows those coalitions to be formed beyond boundaries by our young people.

That is the force that I believe will be the tipping point to cause nations of the world and to cause powers to understand that it cannot be business as usual. And that simply to respond to the dictates of powerful lobbying groups or unique pockets and constituencies will not be sufficient to constitute leadership of your country or your region or the world.

We must therefore work in our own way to mobilize our young people and to mobilize those who influence them: our artists, our sports, our priests, our businesspeople – who are sensitive to these new realities and who believe that they want to be able to talk to their grandchildren and to live in comfort 50, 60 years from now – not as refugees but as proud citizens with a proud and worthy history of dignified battles against those issues that have threatened to cause us the greatest difficulty.

History is replete with examples of how to form global coalitions.

Apartheid did not come down for almost 50 years. But it came down eventually. Because young students like ourselves in the early 80s, the late 70s, believed that it was no longer tolerable for Governments to accept. That this could be how people treated one another in southern Africa. When that battle achieved the moral legitimacy that it needed among young people, established Governments and powers eventually were forced to lower their guard and allow the walls to fall. The same with the Cold War.

So, there is justification, my friends. For me having utmost optimism in our young people and their ability to bring sense, where sense has fled, those will now have control.

The question is, will it be too late for us? Will it be too late for those of us on the frontline? I want to leave you with this last one. And some may think I am mad, or dreaming. Some may think that I listened to too much John Lennon last night.

But I believe that human ingenuity is only limited by our imagination and that we have shown that all things, with the exception of causing the dead to rise, are possible.

On 12 September 1962 in Houston, Texas, John F. Kennedy set America the goal of getting to the moon before the end of the next decade.

The technology did not then exist at the time.

In our own small way, in our countries many of us set a noble goal, but at the time we really did not know how we were going to achieve it or even finance it.

But the setting of the goal and the application then of the resources necessary to achieve the goal, moves in each of us a spirit that is absolutely critical to fight this war against climate change.

We archive what we set our minds to, but we achieve what we put our resources behind. The American [United States] and European Governments, the Russian [Federation] Government, believed in the establishment of a strong military industrial complex. And they set their minds to it.



They all wanted to reach the moon. In 1960, before President Kennedy issued that warning, there was a famous calypso by the Mighty Sparrow. Two sputniks in the sky, talking about the Russian satellite.

I want to urge all of us today that we achieve what we put our resources behind.

We can end malaria but too many instead believe that it is more profitable to spend money on solving male baldness, than ending malaria.

Those who are bald can applaud. The bottom line is, is that if it matters enough, we can choose to end climate change and I truly, truly, truly, truly believe it.

The ingenuity that took us to the moon will solve the problem and the economics, my friends, is moving there too.

Every week there's an article in a different journal or in a different newspaper or different documentary. We are now being told that New York has 72,000 buildings now classified as being at extreme risk of flooding with a value and insurance value of \$129 billion dollars.

An increasing amount of money will be spent to solve climate change. Today the report that came out that \$1.8 trillion dollars is needed to be able to prepare the world for the worst examples and excesses of it. And we want that. But I say we must go further.

And I make bold to say, that the nation that wins the technological race to beat climate change, will become the most powerful nation in the world.

The technology that flowed from the investments in the battle to get to the moon, or to build the military industrial complex, is a technology that we take for granted today, even in terms of these screens in terms of our communication.

Just as the prize for winning that race to the moon, was those technological spinoffs that led to unrivalled economic and military prowess, I suggest to you that, that country that is bold enough not to rely only on their own internal scientific and technological resources, but to embrace the project and to gather from across the world, the best of the best, that country will become the most powerful.

So, let us reflect on which nation it will be. Who will call the world's best scientists? This much I say to you is unlikely to be those who believe that climate change is unreal. Because like an alcoholic, we must first admit that we have a problem, if we are going to solve it.

So why does all of this matter? I end by reflecting with you, what my last two Sundays and Mondays were like, in Barbados. I can call it the "Tale of *Dorian*". The first Sunday and Monday two weeks ago, we heard, from the day before that we were likely to be hit by [Hurricane] *Dorian*.

Barbados – knock on as much wood as I can – has not had a serious hurricane since 1955 – Hurricane *Janet* –because we really are more on the Atlantic Ocean, as my geography teacher used to tell me, than on the Caribbean Sea. But in spite of that, we do get hit periodically, and we mobilized our nation to prepare because, well most of them tend to come at us or north of us. This one was coming south of us. And when they come south of us, we know that there is danger.

Miraculously we waited and waited and waited. It didn't change course. But when it passed us and came over us, the rain did not really fall. And the winds hardly blew. We were then told that there



was dry air that extracted the convection. In my 53 years, I've never heard of the dry air extracting convection from a hurricane before. But I give thanks to Jah for that.

But the next Sunday and Monday, that hurricane *Dorian* that behaves strangely with us was to behave strangely again, only this time with different consequences. And it sat on top of Abaco and Grand Bahama. And it sat on top of Abaco and Grand Bahama. And it sat on top of Abaco and Grand Bahama.

And horror that we see today, that has destroyed, the lives, that has led to the loss of life of what we will never know, suspect – how many really – is not only horrific to our sensibilities, but incapable of true appreciation.

Every one of us here is human. And there is not one of us who would wish this on our worst enemy.

If it is unacceptable for us to contemplate it, then when are we going to summon the political will to halt and to reverse climate change?

It is as if we are watching a horror movie or having a bad dream. But when I pinch, I feel the pain. I know that we are very much awake and living in the worst of times, when it comes to the actions necessary, born out of moral leadership and moral legitimacy.

How many times can a man or woman turn their head and pretend not to see?

Our generation, my friends, has a choice to make. Do we assume leadership and establish our moral legitimacy? Or do we light a million candles for the help that never came? Are we prepared to make the difficult decisions, recognizing that the investments, yes will be made, there will be a country, that will do what is necessary to halt and reverse climate change? I'm confident of that. But will it happen before we are seen? And will it happen by people who will no longer treat us as dispensable?

We cannot fight this battle alone. I can tell you this. If we had the resources to do and apply the scientific research, it would be done.

Ours is a voice.

Ours is to continue the battle.

Ours is to spawn the new allies in our young people across the world.

Ours is to have the insurance and investment colloquial that will try to mitigate some of the clear and impending danger.

But like a man on death row who is waiting and waiting and waiting, we now wait every year for what we thought was September and October and what we are now learning can be as early as July and August and as late as November.

A few years ago, the global community determined that there should be the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage. I ask you, when will that mechanism move from words to reality, for we have no more time to squander?

We do not have the resources to make a meaningful intervention, to make that difference.

Part of me knew when I accepted to do this lecture on today's date, that there might have been a risk, that I would have to ask for it to be deferred because anything in September, or October....



It is fair game. Now it's August, September, October, November...

I want us to leave here this evening declaring that the time has come for us to act.

Martin Luther King spoke about the "fierce urgency of now", but he did not quite contemplate, I am sure, this moment in time. For if he did, the fierce urgency of now would seem to be an understatement, and he may speak more in terms of apocalyptic times.

I ask us to declare, today, that we have only ourselves to blame if we do nothing – and that our only limits are the limits to our imagination.... that we archive, as I said, what we set our minds to - but we *achieve* what we put our resources to.

I ask us equally to recognize that the links between climate change and trade are real. Between trade and food security, between trade and the blue economy, but above all else that the governance structures that we evolved over the course of the last few centuries are now not sufficient to guarantee the survival of the world.

There may be some who are prepared to be Darwinists and to only argue for the survival of the fittest, but the region from which I come, believes that each one matters.

The question is, are they sufficient among you, and your countries, to equally believe that each one matters?

Thank you.

[ENDS]