



## WELCOMING REMARKS

by

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*Excellencies, Delegates, Colleagues, Friends,*

It is an honor to welcome you to COP29. I thank Dr. Sultan Al Jaber and the Emirati Presidency for their tireless work, as they pass the baton to COP President Mukhtar Babayev and Azerbaijan.

In tough times, up against difficult tasks, I don't go in for hopes and dreams. What inspires me is human ingenuity and determination. Our ability to get knocked down and to get up again over and over again, until we accomplish our goals.

The lady I'm standing with, in this picture, is my neighbour, Florence, in Carriacou. In July this year, this was us, standing in all that remained of her home after the devastation of Hurricane Beryl.

At 85, Florence has become one of the millions of victims of runaway climate change this year alone.

She was focused on one thing: Being strong for her family and strong for her community.

And there are people like Florence in every country on Earth. Knocked down, and getting back up again.

This UNFCCC process is the only place we have to address the rampant climate crisis, and to credibly hold each other to account to act on it.

And we know this process is working. Because without it, humanity would be headed towards five degrees of global warming.

In these halls, we negotiate on specific pieces of the puzzle each year. It can feel far away from what's happening in Florence's living room. We cannot afford to continue up-ending lives and livelihoods in every nation – so let's make this real:

*Do you want your grocery and energy bills to go up even more?*

*Do you want your country to become economically uncompetitive?*

*Do you really want even further global instability, costing precious life?*

This crisis is affecting every single individual in the world one way or another. And I'm as frustrated as anyone that one single COP can't deliver the full transformation that every nation needs. But if any of your answers to those questions was no, then it is here that Parties need to agree a way out of this mess.

That's why we're here in Baku. We must agree a new global climate finance goal.

If at least two thirds of the world's nations cannot afford to cut emissions quickly, then every nation pays a brutal price.

If nations can't build resilience into supply chains, the entire global economy will be brought to its knees. No country is immune.

So, let's dispense with the idea that climate finance is charity. An ambitious new climate finance goal is entirely in the self-interest of every single nation, including the largest and wealthiest.

But it's not enough to just agree on a goal. We must work harder to reform the global financial system. Giving countries the fiscal space they so desperately need.

And here in Baku, we must get international carbon markets up and running, by finalising Article 6.

We need to move forward on mitigation, so targets from Dubai are realized. We mustn't let 1.5 slip out of reach. And even as temperatures rise, the implementation of our agreements must claw them back.

Clean energy and infrastructure investment will reach two trillion dollars in 2024. Almost twice that of fossil fuels.

The shift to clean-energy and climate-resilience will not be stopped. Our job is to accelerate this and make sure its huge benefits are shared by all countries and all people.

We must agree adaptation targets. You can't manage what you don't measure. And we need to know if we're on a pathway to increasing resilience. And we must continue to improve the new mechanisms for financial and technical support on loss and damage.

We can't make decisions in the dark. Biennial Transparency Reports, due this year, will give us a clearer picture of the progress we're making, and the gaps that we need to fill.

[Next] year, all countries will deliver their third generation of national climate plans – NDCs.

To support countries in creating and communicating them, the UNFCCC will launch a Climate Plan Campaign.

It will mobilise action from all stakeholders, and align with the efforts of the UN Secretary-General and the incoming Brazilian COP Presidency.

In parallel, we'll re-start Climate Weeks from 2025. Aligning them more closely with our process and the outcomes it must deliver. At the Secretariat, we will continue to work tirelessly with what we have got, while being clear on what funding we need, so we can deliver on what's increasingly being asked of us. And we will keep focus on the safe, inclusive, and meaningful participation of all observers at this COP.

In the past few years, we've taken some historic steps forward. We cannot leave Baku without a substantial outcome. Appreciating the importance of this moment, Parties must act accordingly.

Show determination and ingenuity here at COP29 – We need all parties to push for agreement right from the start – To stand and deliver.

Now it is the time to show that global cooperation is not down for the count. So I urge you all, let us rise together.

I thank you.

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Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Mayor of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Former Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), also addressed the summit.

A special video message from NASA astronauts Sunita Williams and Nick Hague aboard the International Space Station was presented at the Summit.

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Then as part of the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, a conference titled “Youth at the Forefront of Climate Action” took place in Baku.

Attendees included Mehriban Aliyeva, First Lady of Azerbaijan; Aigul Zhaparova, First Lady of Kyrgyzstan; Ziroatkhon Mirziyoyeva, First Lady of Uzbekistan; Emine Erdogan, First Lady of Türkiye; along with Salim bin Mohammed AlMalik, Director-General of ICESCO; Tatiana Molcean, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE); and Regina De Dominicis, UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia.

The event aimed to draw international attention to the commitment of Central Asian and Turkic-speaking countries in the fight against climate change, spotlighting the role of youth involvement in these nations' climate agendas in alignment with international obligations.

First Ladies Ziroatkhon Mirziyoyeva, Aigul Zhaparova and Emine Erdogan delivered speeches at the conference.

Mehriban Aliyeva, First Lady of Azerbaijan, then addressed the event.