

## **Message from the President of the Republic of Seychelles**

**Mr. James Alix Michel**

2009 must be a year of ACTION on climate change.

As leaders, we must be able to tell our children, that we have acted- that we have acted together to save our planet. In the face of any crisis- the worst that anyone can do, is do nothing.

The world financial crisis has tested us all. In every country as well as through our shared multilateral institutions, we have moved, we have taken action to mitigate the effects of the crisis. Time will only tell if we have made the right decisions. But we have all, as leaders, stood in front of our people and explained that we have had to do what needs to be done. In many cases we have had to take radical action. And in many cases, the remedy has been a painful one.

The effects of the financial crisis, pale in significance compared to the potential effects of climate change.

In the same way that the action we have taken to redress the world economy has often challenged established ways of doing things, the action that we need to take to tackle climate change may appear daunting. We have always known that it will be difficult. But it is not, and has never been, impossible.

For small islands- climate change is about our existence. It is about maintaining our human right to live and work in the land of our birth, the land of our parents. We must act now to ensure that our islands are also the land of our children.

Millions of people around the world are living on the edge of an abyss. Recent studies show that assuming current rates of warming, the sea will rise more than 1.4 m in less than 100 years. And emissions continue to grow. Warming continues to accelerate- and if we do nothing that 100 years will very easily become 50.

Islanders face forced displacement and destruction of our already fragile economies. Climate change threatens the very concept of human dignity.

For small islands and least developed countries, the road towards Copenhagen is about survival. The progress made so far is unacceptable. And proposed compromises are simply a means of shifting the debate to future generations.

We must also avoid bringing in conditionality. We must avoid zero-sum games where we perceive our ability to act in relation to others' ability to act. If we all act, we are all better off. The solution involves us ALL taking our responsibility. We are ALL responsible for the state of our planet. We are ALL responsible for the actions that we must take.

We need an unrivalled pledge to cut real emissions to safe levels. A firm deal in Copenhagen will be a pact for all of humanity. We cannot leave any nation behind.

I take the opportunity to call on the developed world to use the advanced technology at their disposal to take the lead in cutting emissions. Cutting emissions will cost. But let us ensure that it is a cost that is shared. If things remain the same, the biggest cost is borne by the poor farmer in Africa and the fishermen in our islands.

The cost of acting to reduce climate change is far less than proceeding on the same route we are currently stuck in. In fact recent studies show that the cost for developed countries of achieving 40% reduction by 2020 is as low as 0.5 to 1.5% of GDP.

Let us act. Let us act now.

Let us stand before our peoples and make a promise on behalf of humanity- a promise to save our coasts, save our islands- to save our world.

Thank you.