

**Commonwealth Secretary-General**  
**High Level Statement for COP27**  
**November 16 2022**

In 1989, at Langkawi, the Commonwealth Leaders predicted the ‘permanent and irreversible damage’ to the environment, and demanded a ‘co-ordinated global effort’.

While we watched, their prediction came true.

We have seen it in Tonga, Nigeria, in Pakistan where devastating floods left a third of the country submerged, and as I speak across the Caribbean.

In every region of our Commonwealth - home to 2.5 billion people - fertile lands turn to dust, wells run dry, storms and floods overwhelm communities, and the ocean rises.

Vulnerable states face being consumed by the waves or drowned by debt.

The unthinkable has become typical.

Yet as climate change advances, we have lost momentum.

The gap on emissions, finance and justice has widened, while the window for action continues to narrow.

It is our duty to close that gap - and this process is our only chance.

**Because we cannot compromise with catastrophe, so we must compromise with each other**

**We must reject** the violence of inaction against those who need us to succeed, now and for generations to come.

**And commit** ourselves to action on land, ocean, energy, finance and resilience.

Our children, and every generation to follow, are counting on us.

Our responsibility is to them. They will be our judge.

And we can do it: if we are prepared to seize the promise of sustainable shared interest.

There is still - just - enough time.

But there is none left to waste.

And there are no more excuses.

If not us, then who?

If not now, then it will be too late.