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Caribbean region's sea level rise 10 % higher than global average

Coastlines within the Caribbean region are experiencing sea level rise of 10 per cent above the global average.

This according to St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Minister of Tourism and Sustainable Development, Hon. Carlos James.

Minister James made the startling revelation while delivering a keynote address at the Climate Action Zone on the margins of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 28th Conference of Parties held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, last week at the Madinat Jumeirah Conference Centre.

According to the tourism and sustainable development minister, over 60 to 80 per cent of the region's coastal tourism infrastructure is at risk from sea level rise due to the adverse impacts of Climate Change. "The need to scale up climate action remains urgent. Coral bleaching and damage and loss caused by storms and hurricanes are already impacting the region's infrastructure," Minister James said.

Minister James called for urgency in addressing the world's greatest threat, noting that climate change has impacted Small Island Developing States (SIDS). "We are looking at significant challenges to Small Island Developing States from coastal erosion, limited resources in protecting and maintaining sea defences and waterfronts and marine resource degradation, Minister James said.

Citing the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) James warned that "unless there are immediate and deep emission reductions across all sectors, limiting global warming to 1.5°C will be beyond reach."

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines' minister noted that while the world struggle to restrict global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, subsidies for oil, coal and natural gas are costing the

equivalent of 7.1 percent of global GDP. “That’s more than governments spend annually on education and about two thirds of what they spend on healthcare,” he said.

The programme at the Climate Action Zone at the UNFCCC 28th Conference of Parties served as a catalyst to accelerate climate adaption and resilience through capacity building, problem-solving, and matchmaking to secure a sustainable future for islands at COP28.

Other speakers at the event included Dr. Hyginus ‘Gene’ Leon, President of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), The Rt. Hon Patricia Scotland KC, Secretary-General, the Commonwealth, His Excellency Surangel S. Whipps Jr., President of the Republic of Palau and the Hon. Sir Alok Sharma, Member of Parliament & COP26 President, UK Government.