Renewables Deliver Life-Saving Adaptation — Not Just Mitigation: Climate-Vulnerable Nations Call for Recognition and Finance at COP30

Belém, Brazil – Representatives of climate-vulnerable countries and leading organisations issued a powerful call at COP30 for renewable energy to be recognised and financed as a *core tool for climate adaptation*, not only for mitigation. Speaking at a news conference hosted by REN21 at the end of week one, panelists shared new evidence and frontline stories showing that renewable energy is already delivering life-saving benefits before, during, and after extreme weather events.

Drawing on new REN21 analysis of 76 National Adaptation Plans and 64 NDCs as well as recent experiences from Small Island Developing States (SIDS), speakers underscored that decentralised and diversified renewable energy is keeping essential services—water, communication, sanitation, health facilities, irrigation and cold chains—running in the face of intensifying storms, floods, droughts and heatwaves.

Yet despite its proven role, renewable energy remains largely invisible in adaptation finance, multilateral processes, and the emerging Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) indicator framework.

Speakers urged world leaders at COP30 to integrate adaptation-focused renewable energy indicators into national strategies, monitoring systems, and global frameworks to unlock finance and make progress measurable.

KEY QUOTES

Rana Adib, Executive Director, REN21

> *"To harness the full potential of renewables, renewable energy systems must be built to high-quality standards as climate-resilient infrastructure. COP30 must make renewable energy for adaptation visible. Countries need to integrate renewables into their national adaptation and development strategies to unlock finance and strengthen monitoring. We urgently need adaptation-focused renewable energy indicators, because we can only manage what we measure. And we need a community of practice, as renewables have historically been framed as mitigation only—yet both adaptation and renewable energy are fundamentally cross-cutting and central to resilient development."*

Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner, Climate Envoy, Republic of the Marshall Islands

> *"In the Marshall Islands, renewable energy is tackling our vulnerability—and that is what adaptation is about. Two years ago, rolling blackouts lasted for days, shutting down water, sanitation, and communications while other atolls faced inundation and drought. Without secure energy, every disaster becomes harder to survive. Renewable energy isn't our preferred option—it is our most practical one. For us, renewable energy is energy security for adaptation."*

Dr. James Fletcher, Climate Envoy, CARICOM; Former Minister of Energy, Saint Lucia

> *"Renewables are an important line of defence when the lights go out, when the strong winds come, when hurricanes strike, and when communities must recover—as we've just seen in Jamaica after Hurricane Melissa. For us, renewables are not just a mitigation option; they are part of our resilience infrastructure."*
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> *"Too often, distributed solar, storage, and microgrids are treated as mitigation projects and financed as optional extras. This must change. We need a new finance architecture that recognises renewable-based adaptation as a priority. Adaptation windows in multilateral funds should treat decentralised renewables as core adaptation, not side benefits. And vulnerable countries cannot be expected to borrow*

at commercial rates to keep hospitals running and water flowing after disasters they did not cause."

Emilie Beauchamp, Lead for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (Adaptation), IISD

"There is little systematic evidence on the role of renewables in adaptation, even though developing countries are increasingly using them. In Jamaica, during Hurricane Melissa, homes with solar systems maintained power. That is direct, measurable resilience. But these contributions remain invisible because global and national MEL systems don't fully capture the scale of impact. An important part of adaptation progress is going unrecognised. COP30 is a critical opportunity to strengthen MEL systems so that diversified solutions—including renewables—are properly measured and valued."

Claudio Forner, Head of Climate Policy, Climate Analytics

"You cannot achieve a 1.5°C-compatible energy system unless it is resilient and incorporates climate-risk considerations. Climate impacts determine how much renewable power can be deployed and where. Once climate risks are included in modelling, energy systems look fundamentally different. Resilience must be embedded in every pathway."

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