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Speech on Lost Biodiversity

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Speech on Lost Biodiversity

Dear tourist board, thank you very much for this opportunity. Did you know that a third of marine life is susceptible to extinction? According to Kubiak (2019), a compiled by a high-level agency comprising of ecological and biological professionals from fifty countries, established that companies and tourists contribute to lost biodiversity (Kubiak, 2019). The account showed that half a million to one million marine species face extinction globally, with the annihilation levels accelerating suddenly in the last century.

We all know that humans depend on biodiversity for existence. However, shockingly, our undertakings are the source of the titanic deteriorations in marine life, as highlighted in the report. Whereas the information outlined is worrying, all is not lost. If we can respond swiftly and adopt remedial measures to abolish untenable fishing methods and safeguard a larger volume of our oceans, we can limit aquatic biodiversity damage.

Ladies and gentlemen, fishing has had the most significant impact on the country's marine biodiversity over the last 50 years. To put up with worldwide fish loads, many fishing companies have resorted to venturing far and deep into protected waters away from their domestic prerogative (Packer et al., 2019). Also, these fishing companies conduct their fishing activities in areas that are managed by a patchwork of sectoral and regional entities that are not properly equipped to conserve marine biodiversity. In total, the report notes that third of fish stocks are due to overfishing and an additional 60% face fishing to the exploitable workable levels (UN report, n.d.).

In addition to that, ladies and gents, the change in Barbados coastal land and sea use have also worsened marine biodiversity loss. Companies have camped along the shorelines, whereas others engage in offshore aquaculture, oil and gas exploration, and trawling activities that have

damaged marine habitats. Simultaneously, toxic pollutants used in industries and agricultural activities poison fish and other aquatic life. Enterprises are also guilty of carbon dioxide discharges that make the water acidic, hence making it difficult for corals, shellfish, and planktons to stay alive and multiply. Let me remind you that since atmospheric circulation and ocean patterns are universal, marine acidification is felt globally. This means that the loss in diversity being witnessed in Barbados is also being seen worldwide.

As we talk about the loss of biodiversity in Barbados, I will not fail to mention the role of climate change in this adversity. Remember that health of the ecosystem that humans together with other species rely on is worsening faster. Also, this deterioration is eroding the basic foundations of our economies, health, food security and quality of life, not only in Barbados but globally. As per the report, climate change possess an additional threat to marine biodiversity. The report suggests that climate change will drive the decline of marine life by 3 to 25 by the end of the 21st century, depending on what we do to prevent the increasing rates of greenhouse emissions. The report also notes that at significant risk is the 90% of global fishermen who depend on the seas and oceans for their livelihoods and account for 50% of the worldwide fish harvests.

Tourism activities are also blamed for the loss of biodiversity witnessed. For instance, there has been a lack of proper planning by the relevant state agencies, which has led to buildings' mushrooming along the country's coastline. This sprawl includes houses built in marine habitats to accommodate the increasing number of tourists. On the same note, roads are constructed to facilitate tourists' smooth movement in and out of these areas; employee houses are constructed, car parks, service areas, and waste disposal units. These activities result in habitat disintegration making the habitats too small to sustain marine and aquatic life. At the

same time, we have witnessed the coastal habitats being degraded due to tourism development. The coastal wetlands are being drained and filled due to a lack of adequate space to construct new tourist facilities. These actions have caused a severe disturbance in the animal habitats leading to loss of biodiversity. We have also seen tourist activities happening in and around fragile ecosystems. Littering, snorkeling, and sport fishing are some of the activities that cause direct harm to marine life and degrade their habitats, leading to the loss of marine biodiversity.

The problem of loss of biodiversity has also affected me at a personal level. I remember growing up in Barbados, and life was simple. We only caught fish that we ate that day, and we never engaged in fishing what was considered native species that are unique to the country. Simultaneously, life along the shoreline was enjoyable since we could swim in the ocean with family, there were no tourist facilities like now. The oceanfront was open to anyone who wanted to enjoy their free time. Marine life was in abundance and we could see dolphins swim in the sunset.

Certain marine species had medicinal value to eat or use as medicine when one got ill. As I speak to you today, the oceanfront is not a free place where our children can walk and swim or fish freely. Partly because tourist facilities have been built in these areas, security tightened and another reason is that the waters are no longer that interesting to enjoy due to lack of marine life. Those who want to see the dolphins will have to take a boat and venture further into the ocean, where the few remaining dolphins that are yet to be caught by fishermen are found. As we engage today, different marine species, insects, cultivated plants, and diseases have found their way into the country. These are species that are non-native to the country's environment and have also caused enormous destruction of the marine ecosystem.

Ladies and gentlemen, as I conclude, let me implore you to take action and save the ocean's biodiversity before it is too late. We already know where the problem lies, but we are all guilty of reluctance or termed political goodwill. Suppose we can act promptly, eliminate illegal and untenable fishing activities, safeguard a huge percentage of our oceans, and adopt treaties that protect endangered marine species. In that case, we can curtail the harm of aquatic biodiversity. Apart from adopting science-based strategies that help preserve marine ecology, we need to address overfishing and re-establish the dwindling marine population and create and properly manage protected areas in the seas. Also, we must address the issue of climate change and the use of fossil fuel that is increasing the global temperatures making it difficult for certain ocean species to survive.

Besides, ladies and gentlemen, we must also address the issue of tourism activities in marine habitats. Tourism is crucial as it is a foreign exchange earner, but it must be done to preserve the natural habitat of marine life. It is high time we abandon activities like sport fishing that degrade the marine population and come up with favorable policies that guide against ocean pollution and littering. Humanity depends on the seas and oceans for oxygen, food, and the moderate climate we enjoy. In this regard, I implore you to champion sustainable practices that limit the drastic loss of biodiversity. Failure to adopt remedial interventions will lead to further degradation of the already affected marine ecosystem. Apart from that, a country like Barbados, whose economy is hinged on the ocean, will continue suffering serious economic consequences due to unsustainable tourism activities, overfishing, and pollution from agricultural chemicals and industrial waste.

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