

Prime Minister Gaston Browne to Champion Climate Justice and Greater International Action for Small Island States at Global Citizen NOW Summit in Australia



PERTH, Western Australia — 16th October 2026 — Prime Minister the Right Honorable Gaston Browne is in Perth, Western Australia, to participate in the prestigious Global Citizen NOW: Perth Summit, scheduled for October 18–20, 2026, where he will renew his call for urgent international action to address the existential threats posed by climate change to Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The Prime Minister's participation comes at a critical juncture in global climate diplomacy, as world leaders prepare for the 31st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP31) and Antigua and Barbuda prepares to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) from November 1–4, 2026.

The international summit will bring together political leaders, business executives, philanthropists, environmental advocates and representatives of civil society to advance practical solutions to some of the world's most pressing development challenges, including climate change, energy security, sustainable development and equitable access to financing.

Prime Minister Browne is scheduled to participate in a high-level discussion on Tuesday, October 20, under the theme “The Cost of Complacency.”

During the session, the Prime Minister is expected to highlight the devastating human, social and economic consequences of climate inaction, particularly for vulnerable countries in the Caribbean and Pacific regions.

Drawing on Antigua and Barbuda's own experience, Prime Minister Browne will underscore the reality that climate change is not a distant threat for small island nations but an immediate challenge affecting homes, livelihoods, infrastructure, food security and national development.

The Prime Minister is expected to reference the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma in 2017, which damaged or destroyed approximately 95 percent of buildings in Barbuda and forced the evacuation of the island's population.

He will also draw attention to the experience of other vulnerable countries, including Dominica, where Hurricane Maria caused damage and losses estimated at more than twice the country's annual gross domestic product.

Prime Minister Browne has consistently maintained in international forums that small island states contribute disproportionately little to global greenhouse gas emissions yet bear some of the most severe consequences of climate change.

He has repeatedly argued that climate vulnerability must be recognized as a fundamental development challenge and that the international community has a responsibility to provide practical assistance to countries facing repeated climate-related disasters.

The Prime Minister's participation in Australia will also provide an opportunity to highlight Antigua and Barbuda's growing leadership in advancing the interests of Small Island Developing States.

Under Prime Minister Browne's leadership, Antigua and Barbuda hosted the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) in May 2024, which resulted in the adoption of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS): A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity.

The ten-year framework provides a platform for addressing the structural vulnerabilities of small island nations and advancing international cooperation in areas including sustainable development, climate resilience, financing and economic transformation.

Prime Minister Browne has also been a leading advocate for the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), which seeks to ensure that the international financial system gives greater consideration to countries' exposure to climate disasters, economic shocks and other vulnerabilities when determining eligibility for development assistance and concessional financing.

The Prime Minister has long argued that traditional measurements based primarily on per capita income fail to reflect the unique challenges faced by small island economies.

Another major focus of his participation will be the international legal efforts undertaken by Antigua and Barbuda, in partnership with Tuvalu, through the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS).

The Commission played a central role in securing the landmark advisory opinion of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea concerning states' obligations to protect the marine environment from the effects of climate change.

The Prime Minister is expected to emphasize the importance of translating these legal and diplomatic achievements into concrete international action, particularly in relation to climate finance, accountability and support for vulnerable countries.

The Perth summit will also provide a platform for Prime Minister Browne to advance his longstanding position that the transition to renewable energy is essential not only for environmental protection but also for the economic independence and long-term survival of small island states.

The Prime Minister is expected to address the challenges created by dependence on imported fossil fuels, high borrowing costs and the diversion of scarce public resources towards disaster recovery.

He will advocate stronger international partnerships capable of supporting affordable renewable energy systems, climate-resilient infrastructure and sustainable economic development.

These priorities are consistent with Antigua and Barbuda's efforts to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels, encourage investment in clean energy technologies and strengthen national resilience.

Prime Minister Browne's participation assumes added significance as Antigua and Barbuda prepares to welcome Commonwealth leaders to CHOGM 2026.

As the incoming Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, the Prime Minister is expected to advocate a more coordinated and influential Commonwealth approach to climate justice, development financing and the protection of vulnerable member states.

He will also address the opportunities for cooperation among Caribbean and Pacific small island nations, whose shared experiences provide a strong foundation for collective international advocacy.

The Prime Minister is expected to emphasize that the forthcoming Commonwealth meeting in Antigua and Barbuda must help translate international commitments into measurable action and meaningful partnerships.

The Global Citizen NOW summit will provide an important opportunity to advance discussions on the proposed Perth Declaration and the priorities to be carried forward to COP31.

Prime Minister Browne's participation reinforces Antigua and Barbuda's continued commitment to ensuring that the voices of small and vulnerable states remain central to global discussions on climate change, sustainable development and international economic cooperation.

The Prime Minister is also scheduled to participate in high-level engagements with international leaders and development partners during the summit.

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