

The Secretary-General's Remarks at Climate Action 2016

Washington D.C. , 5 May 2016

[As prepared for delivery]

It is a great pleasure to be with you today.

Just two weeks ago, 175 countries came to the United Nations to sign the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Never before have so many countries signed an international agreement in one day.

It is clear that the Paris Agreement enjoys overwhelming support from all regions.

Large emerging economies, high and middle income countries, and nations at all stages of development are saying they want a low-carbon future that can limit global temperature rise and underpin sustainable development.

Two of the world's largest emitters – China and the United States – have pledged their continued commitment and collaboration.

The Presidents of both countries jointly announced in March that they would join the Paris Agreement this year.

I thank President Obama and President Xi Jinping for their leadership.

And I thank Secretary of State Kerry for the statesmanship he showed in Paris that helped secure a deal.

Once 55 countries accounting for 55 per cent of global emissions join the Paris Agreement, it will enter into force.

I will do all I can to help this happen.

We must turn the promise of Paris into action and implementation as soon as possible.

We need action now.

Temperatures continue to climb.

Arctic sea ice is melting fast.

Droughts, storms and floods are costing lives and productivity from Fiji to the Philippines; from Thailand to Texas.

It is time to take climate action to the next level.

We need to accelerate the speed, scope and scale of our response, locally and globally.

I have been looking forward to this event because it is about solutions – innovation and imagination; collaboration and partnerships between the public and private sectors.

Today as never before, the stars are aligning in favour of climate action.

Everywhere I look, I see signs of hope.

Governments have signed the Paris Agreement and submitted their national climate plans.

Here, in the United States, cities, the private sector, investors, the finance community, the military, faith communities and civil society are driving the transformative change we need.

The advantages are clear: new markets; new jobs; cleaner air and better health.

That is why cities are reducing emissions and increasing their resilience.

Companies are inventing new, green technologies and scaling up their use of sustainable, clean energy.

Investors are scrutinizing fossil fuel investments and insurers are beginning to integrate climate risk into their decision-making.

Across this country and around the world we are seeing the emergence of the clean energy, climate-resilient economy of tomorrow.

Initiatives such as Sustainable Energy for All and Caring for Climate are gathering momentum.

Our goal now must be nothing less than a radical transformation of the global economy to a zero-carbon world in the second half of this century.

This will require mobilization on an unprecedented scale –here and around the globe.

Both the United States and China are pivotal for this task.

Both have pledged significant reductions in their emissions.

And both have agreed in Paris on transparent rules of the road to monitor progress, enhance accountability and foster a race to the top to drive climate ambition.

That is why, in September, in the margins of the G20 meeting, I intend to co-convene a meeting similar to this one in China.

We cannot afford a minute's rest.

Last year, the world united to create an ambitious sustainable development agenda to transform the global economy, bring new opportunities to billions of people, and leave a more habitable planet for future generations.

We have to deliver on these promises by working together.

Climate Action 2016 will further solidify the coalitions that were highlighted at my Climate Summit in 2014, and in the Action Agenda in Lima and Paris.

I encourage all of you to work with the COP Presidencies to make the High-Level Event on Climate Action at COP-22 in Marrakesh a resounding success by demonstrating concrete progress on the action agenda.

Here, you will focus on six, high-value areas of multi-stakeholder partnership: sustainable energy; sustainable land-use; cities; transport; and tools for decision-making [and resilience].

Each is integral to tackling climate change and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

To rise to these challenges we will need strong partnerships at all levels.

No sector of society and no nation can succeed alone.

I encourage you to collaborate. Innovate. Invest.

Together we can build the world we want, and the world we are proud to leave to our children.

Thank you.