

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

REMARKS AT CLOSING OF COP21

Paris, 12 December 2015

Mesdames, Messieurs,

All my congratulations.

The Paris Agreement on climate change is a monumental triumph for people and planet

I know I speak for everyone in this room in applauding COP21 President Laurent Fabius and UNFCCC Executive-Secretary Christiana Figueres for their outstanding stewardship of these negotiations.

In the face of an unprecedented challenge, you have demonstrated unprecedented leadership.

Climate change is the defining challenge of our time.

That is why I have made it one of the defining priorities of my tenure as Secretary-General.

Over the past nine years, I have spoken repeatedly with nearly every world leader.

I have visited the climate front lines, from the Arctic to Antarctica and to the Amazon, from the Sahel to the Aral Sea.

I have been to Pacific Islands that are sinking under the waves.

Most of all, I have listened to people – the young, the poor and the vulnerable, including indigenous peoples, from every corner of the globe.

They have demanded that world leaders act to safeguard their well-being and that of generations to come.

Here in Paris, we have heeded their voices – as was our duty.

Excellencies,

We have solid results on all key points.

The agreement demonstrates solidarity.

It is ambitious, flexible, credible and durable.

All countries have agreed to hold global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius.

And recognizing the risk of grave consequences, you have further agreed to pursue efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees.

This is especially important for the nations of Africa, small Island Developing States and Least Developed countries.

You have listened to the voices of the most vulnerable and recognized the importance of minimizing and addressing loss and damage.

One hundred and eighty-seven Parties have submitted their national plans, the INDCs.

I urge the remaining Parties to submit their plans as soon as possible.

You have rightly agreed that the current level of ambition is the floor, not the ceiling, and that every five years, beginning before 2020, you will regularly review what is needed in line with science.

The Paris Agreement ensures sufficient, balanced adaptation and mitigation support for developing countries, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.

Developed countries have agreed to lead in mobilizing finance and scale up technology support and capacity building.

Developing countries have assumed increasing responsibility to address climate change in line with their capabilities.

Governments have agreed to binding, robust, transparent rules of the road to ensure that all countries do what they have agreed across a range of issues.

Business leaders came to Paris in unprecedented numbers.

The Action Agenda, and the prior commitments made at last year's Climate Summit in New York, show that many powerful climate solutions are already available, and many more are poised to come.

With these elements in place, markets now have the clear signal they need to unleash the full force of human ingenuity and scale up investments that will generate low-emissions, resilient growth.

What was once unthinkable has now become unstoppable.

Excellencies,

When historians look back on this day, they will say that global cooperation to secure a future safe from climate change took a dramatic new turn here in Paris.

Today, we can look into the eyes of our children and grandchildren, and we can finally, after so many years of discussion and delay, tell them that we have joined hands to bequeath a more habitable world to them and to future generations.

We have an agreement. It is a good agreement. You should all be proud.

Now we must stay united -- and bring the same spirit to the crucial test of implementation.

That work starts tomorrow.

For today, congratulations again on a job well done.

Let us work together, with renewed commitment, to make this a better world for all.

Thank you.

Merci.

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