

ESTONIA

Mr President, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen

Just one month ago, Estonia hosted the first Nordic-Baltic climate change conference, inviting scientists, economists and politicians to discuss how best to fight against and adapt to climate change. I said then and i will repeat now, that treating climate change as something not urgent, must stop.

FOUR WEEKS AGO, non of us had any idea, how painfully the tragic events in Philippines will remind us all of this URGENCY and deadly seriousness of the issue. These more frequent extreme weather events we read about in IPCC reports are not delusions of crazy scientists, they are happening already, right now. And worse is to come - not just killing storms and draughts, but disease, biodiversity loss and climate refugees.

This alone should be enough to make us determined to act. But climate change is also, as COMMISSIONER Connie Hedegaard said on TUESDAY, the central economic question of our time. There can be no realistic, let alone successful model for future economic growth that doesn't take climate change into account.

Realizing the importance of the question will of course not make it automatically easy to solve. It may actually make it harder, as the stakes are so high. But I don't think blaming each other and pointing fingers is conducive to finding a solution.

I could spend all my speech RECOUNTING, how the history hasn't been kind to countries like Estonia. As it hasn't been kind to many other countries here.

But we know from our own experience that today's problems will not be solved by dwelling on the past. Despite our unfortunate starting point, Estonia has managed to cut its CO2 emissions by half compared to 1990. In the last few years, we have invested 400 mln euros into climate change mitigation projects - this is more than 2 percent of our annual GDP.

We have funded adaptation efforts in Bhutan and Afganistan. And we have already decided to continue with financing similar projects in 2014-2017. That decision is included in the 4 years budgetary plan of Estonia. Together with EU, Estonia remains committed to offer assistance to those hardest hit by climate change.

We are prepared to do more and so should everyone else. We all have agreed that new legally-binding agreement applicable to all will be adopted in 2015.

Today and tomorrow, we need to focus on what can be done right here, right now. First of all, we need to make absolutely certain, that an (global, legally binding) agreement can be achieved in Paris. We have to reach a consensus on what needs to happen in the course of the next 2 years to

have by the end of the 2015 a truly global commitment to our planet and our people. An agreement that would keep the rise in global average temperature under 2 degrees.

We must also address the years before the new agreement will come to force. The more time passes, the more difficult it is to fix the climate issue before it's too late. So it makes absolutely no sense to wait 6 years and let the SITUATION deteriorate, and then try to turn back the clock in 2020.

Dear colleagues,

There will never come a perfect moment for tackling climate change. We can always find a myriad of excuses - not enough money, not enough support from the public, not enough time, not enough evidence... But this is the moment we have and we should make it as perfect as possible.