

Address by the Taoiseach to UN Secretary General's Climate Change Summit, New York, 23 September 2014

Secretary General, I welcome your timely initiative.

Global warming is a stark reality that can only be dealt with by a collective global response. We are all interdependent and interconnected... we share a common humanity... and each of us must play our part.

Leaders, Governments and corporations have a responsibility to define objectives, make policy decisions and take action to preserve our planet and secure a prosperous future for its inhabitants.

When we talk about global challenges like economic growth, job creation, global food and nutrition needs, and energy, the watchword has to be sustainability.

We will only succeed in tackling climate change if we adopt a sustainable and truly collective approach; one that is ambitious but fair; that is challenging but achievable.

Copenhagen was not a success - Lima and Paris have to be.

Leading nations have to step forward. Others will follow.

Ireland will play its role as part of the EU contribution to the global effort. The EU is committed to bringing forward its contribution to a global agreement early in 2015 - I urge others to do likewise.

Leaders must show conviction, clarity, courage and consistency in their actions.

Conviction.... that targets are fair and achievable.

Clarity.... in knowing that our targets will keep the rise in global temperatures below 2 degrees.

Courage.... to step up to the mark.

Consistency.... in implementing policy, and creating a credible track record.

Ireland has a strong and proud track record.

With our EU partners, we overachieved on our first Kyoto Protocol targets.

We have implemented a range of carbon-pricing instruments, including a carbon tax.

We have long-term objectives for 2050 of an 80% reduction across electricity, transport and built environment.

We are a world leader in carbon efficient agriculture and food production, a major component of Ireland's economy. We will continue our efforts, for example through our Origin Green Programme, to drive carbon efficiency and shape the international approach to sustainable agriculture and food production.

We are working within the EU to ensure a fair and effective burden-sharing of the EU's overall commitment. And we are implementing legislation to underpin our climate change efforts.

We appreciate the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable communities.

We have worked closely with partners to ensure that action on climate change, including climate justice, is a key element of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Last year, with Mary Robinson, we hosted a Hunger-Nutrition-Climate Justice conference in Dublin.

We have contributed generously to fast-start finance, despite our very challenging economic and fiscal circumstances in recent years.

Today, I am pleased to confirm our support for international initiatives on phasing down HFCs, green freight, global carbon pricing and climate smart agriculture.

President Kennedy reminded us over 50 years ago that we all live on the same planet, we all breathe the same air, and we are all mortal. These words are still true.

So Mr. Secretary General, the hand of the future beckons, the clock is ticking, and we have no time to waste.

Thank You.