



**Austrian World Summit
Vienna, 20 June 2017
Statement by
Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

H.E. Alexander Van der Bellen, Federal President of Austria,
H.E. Mr. Christian Kern, Federal Chancellor of Austria,
Mr. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Chair, R20, Regions of Climate Action,
H.E. Mr. Laurent Fabius, President of COP 21,
Colleagues from the United Nations system,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking R20 for the invitation to join you for the first Austrian World Summit. This summit opens at a crucial moment for the future of humanity.

We have in our hands all the elements needed for meeting the climate change challenge, transforming reality and opening the door to a secure and stable future for all.

In moments of great change, we have seen over and over again great people rising to lead this change. Now is truly a moment for these ‘action heroes’ and champions.

People from all walks of life, and in all countries and on all continents, must carry the flag for sustainable development and action on climate change. Every level of society, every community and every sector of every economy must be involved.

Austria, in convening this inaugural World Summit, is declaring itself an action hero – thank you Chancellor Kern and President Van der Bellen.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, is another action hero not just for his work in film and as Governor of California, but for his establishment of R20 and highly visible advocacy.

He is joined by UN Special Envoy for Cities and Climate Change Michael Bloomberg and Jerry Brown, the current governor of the State of California, and who has been designated by the Prime Minister of Fiji, in his role as President of COP 23, as special

envoy for states and regions for this year's climate change conference. Champions of climate action.

Actor Leonardo DiCaprio, whose foundation is funding renewable energy projects in many R20 members, is also a hero. As are the scientists who help us understand the challenge, the public and private sector leaders that have recently reiterated support for the principles of Paris and every individual who makes a climate-conscious choice.

And when we mention these remarkable people and institutions, we also must look no further than the DSG Amina J Mohammed and her tireless work to realize the Sustainable Development Goals and now to implement them.

This immense and important task is supported by Secretary-General António Guterres, who himself champions the fact that “implementing the 2030 Agenda goes hand-in-glove with limiting global temperature rise and increasing climate resilience” and sees action on climate change as a tremendous opportunity.

Our UN organization, the climate change secretariat, recognizes those who are making a difference through the Momentum for Change initiative, which awards people and organizations doing incredible things.

From the million women initiative of Australia to Dar Si Hmad, a women-led NGO in Morocco that harvests water from fog in the drylands, real heroes are making a difference where it counts the most – in the real world.

There are many others in this room today, and everywhere in our planet like the children in the beautiful film – and if you are not, I am glad you are here because we need you, too!

It is our collective responsibility to make every man, woman and child an action hero or champion, because the challenges we face are sobering. But the possibilities for a better world are enormous, and we need everyone on board.

The urgent need for action is apparent as we watch the world change around us – temperatures are soaring to record highs, sea ice is near record lows, the Great Barrier Reef is bleaching, the Larson C ice shelf in Antarctica is breaking off.

At the same moment, the world is waking up to the fact that climate and sustainability action reduces risk, builds resilience and opens opportunity.

The OECD *Investing in Climate, Investing in Growth* report says that ‘bringing together the growth and climate agendas’ could add one per cent to economic output in G20 countries by 2021 – that is less than five years.

And avoiding climate change impacts such as coastal flooding or storm damage could increase global GDP by nearly five per cent by 2050.

This moment of recognition that a healthy planet is required for a healthy economy is marked by an unprecedented surge of support for the Paris Agreement and Agenda for Sustainable Development. We must seize this moment!

Governments are looking to the international climate talks to spark transformative change. The Paris Climate Change Agreement has now been ratified by 148 nations. We are now in the era of implementation.

In Bonn in November, nations – led by the Government of Fiji and supported by the Government of Germany – will be working quickly and cooperatively to make the Paris Agreement fully operational.

In 2018, we expect a complete set of enabling frameworks for the agreement and a first look at progress towards our climate goals.

Yes, this process has had some setbacks. Yet all nations remain engaged and committed to changing the way the world accomplishes growth and development.

But this is only part of the story. We know that nations alone cannot meet the climate change and sustainable development challenge – policy will point the way, but meeting the challenge we face requires real action by all.

In this moment, champions are leading action in key sectors – energy, transportation, finance and business. Regional governments and cities are acting because of the benefits they can deliver to their citizens.

The UN climate process recognizes the role of subnational governments, and all non-state actors, through the Marrakesh Partnership. We are right now discussing how to better reflect these crucial contributions in the global climate talks.

And the breadth of this action, led by R20, and also alliances like the Under2Coalition or the Climate Group or the Global Covenant of Mayors – and so many more – is breathtaking.

The fact that so many cities, territories, states and regions are – along with business and investors – aligning with the aims and ambitions of the Paris Climate Change Agreement is unprecedented in respect to a UN agreement.

We need similar alignment behind not just SDG Goal 13 on climate change – but behind all the Sustainable Development Goals and at ever higher levels of action and ambition.

This is how we must define implementation. This is the change we must champion.

In doing so, we can truly open trillions in economic opportunity – 12 trillion or more by some estimates. And we can do so while lifting people out of poverty, promoting public health, ensuring access to food, water and energy and protecting the planet we all share and rely on.

This summit will showcase inspiring examples of action, but I can already tell you that more is needed. We must work tirelessly and together to seize this moment.

We must make climate and sustainability action just ‘the way business is done now’.

In this moment, no investment, project or development should advance unless it is in line with the Paris Agreement and Agenda for Sustainable Development.

If it is not, there must be compelling and overwhelming reasons why not – not the other way ‘round.

This is a true test for action heroes in governments and in champions in city, state and regional governments, as well as in regional development banks, civil society, academia and across the private sector.

This is the opportunity for all leaders at all levels to help turn climate commitments and aspirational sustainability goals into real action and truly transform our reality.

Together, we can realize the vision laid out in 2015 – in Paris, in New York, in Sendai and in Addis Ababa.

We must be champions for change and deliver a world that is stable and secure,
where opportunity is open to all and peace and prosperity flourish.

Thank you.

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