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The spoken word is final!

We can because we have to

Federal Councillor Moritz Leuenberger at the 15th United Nations Climate Change
Conference (COP 15), Copenhagen, 17 December 2009

Mister President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Is there anything new to say? Hasn't everything already been said?

Hasn't it been said a thousand times, that now it is high time for action, not words
And yet despite that we are still speaking. Despite that, some are waiting to act until
others take the first step.

Many people around the world are asking themselves whether the politicians in
Copenhagen are even willing to take decisions? Can the international community put
a stop to global warming? Are developing countries and industrialised nations even
capable of solidarity? Or are they only capable of talking and arguing about it?

And the people ask themselves: Are these really the 'united nations' or is it just a
talking shop?

Today, here in Copenhagen, we have to give them an answer.

We know that the hour of responsibility chimed long ago.



It is no longer about symbolic activism, no longer about doting on polar bears at the zoo, about singing heart-wrenching songs or about demonstrating.

It is about more than that: It is about being or not being, and not in the profound sense of Hamlet's musings, but as an existential question. It is about habitats by the sea and in the mountains. It is about food and water, war and peace, refugees and suffering, life and death.

It is far too late to be looking back and pointing the finger at one another. We are all dependent on each other if we are to contain the effects of global warming so that mankind is not threatened in its existence.

We have all long known that in order to achieve this we must:

- Set binding reduction targets,
- Long-term targets up until 2050, as well as short-term targets up to 2020
- We must clearly set out how we are going to achieve these goals,
- and we have to make available the necessary financial resources.

Many have recognised that fact and have recently taken action. They have passed laws that they were previously not prepared to pass. They have declared their support for goals they previously rejected. They made first steps before others committed.

They have recognised the scientific findings and have listened to reason. If we are clear in our minds as to what we must do to stop climate change, then we can actually save the world.

Now is the time to find the right pace and rhythm for our climate policies. The new industrial revolution is irreversible and we will succeed in accelerating its pace.



- That is why European countries, including Switzerland, will lead the way by reducing their emissions by 20%
- That is why we will go even further and reduce our emissions by up to 30% because we know that other industrialised and emerging countries will commit to doing the same.
- That is why none of us will ultimately get around reducing worldwide emissions by at least 50% by 2050.
- That is why we, the industrialised nations, must reduce by at least 80%.
- That is why emerging countries will also accept their responsibility and do their part.
- That is why we will also participate in funding on behalf of the poorest countries. In Nairobi in 2006 Switzerland proposed a worldwide CO2 levy based on the polluter pays principle in order to finance the damage caused by climate change. This proposal is still on the table and is, in our view, still the fairest solution. But it also requires a near term financial commitment. Switzerland is prepared to contribute its part.

The age of innocence is over. The hour of responsibility has come, and I call upon all of us to recognise this responsibility.

We can put a stop to global warming because we have to put a stop to it.

We can help to protect one another from the very real damage caused by global warming and help each other to overcome it.

Industrialised nations and developing countries can act in solidarity because we have to proceed in solidarity.

We have no other choice.

Copenhagen can be a success because it has to be a success.