

National Statement IRELAND

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Bonn, Germany

#COP23

'The Paris Agreement is about action by all, the great and the small'

Thank you, Mr. President.

Ireland supports the statements made on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

I would firstly like to thank and congratulate our Fijian COP Presidency for their warm welcome and their excellent management of this COP, and for their preparations over the course of 2017.

We arrived here with a challenging programme of work and I think we can be very proud of where we have taken it. I would also like to thank our German hosts of this COP.

As the events of this last year have shown, changes in our climate are continuing to have an impact globally.

For those of us whose countries border the Atlantic, we have not been immune to the impacts of one of the worst hurricane seasons on record. Hurricane Ophelia made its unprecedented landfall in Ireland in October.

As we all know the word "global" in the term "global warming" accurately summarises the incontrovertible science underlying the threat facing our planet. It also underlines the vastness and potentially daunting, if even discouraging, challenge we face.

How can any one of us make a meaningful contribution?

The task of political leadership by all of us is to bridge the gulf between the global challenge and national responsibility, between each countries' obligation and the responsibility of every citizen, young and old, alike.

It may be a tired truism that we cannot change the world. However, when it comes to climate change, it is a pressing fact that the world cannot change without us.

So how can any one country, especially a small country, like Ireland, make a difference?

Small countries don't have the capacity or resources to do everything, but we can do some things, very well, and show by our example, how others can follow.

I firmly believe that COP23 is not just about the technical rule book, but as political leaders in our home countries, we must provide practical, implementable solutions to the real challenges of both mitigation and adaptation, while living up to the responsibility of Sustainable Development Goals.

For example, we must not only look at where food comes from but also how it is produced in terms of emissions, including food waste.

While Ireland is a global leader when it comes to emissions per litre of milk produced, we can and will do better. We are now working to catch up on the beef production emissions, through an innovative programme of (genotyping) analysing the genetic make-up of 1 million beef producing animals. On this scale, this is a global first and we want to share our knowledge with the global community, so that we can all benefit.

In tandem with food production, we are also looking at waste. Right from the farm, where we are identifying input savings through our Smart Farming programme and bringing them through to food processing and retailers. We are extending food waste bins to every home in Ireland. Noting that 27% of our population live in villages of less than 50 people, this will be a significant challenge.

To tackle the challenge of transport in such a disperse country, we are working with the telecoms operators, so that by the end of 2018, one third of our population outside our cities will have fibre optic broadband outside their doors.

We are determined to continue the momentum of this roll out until every home in Ireland has access to high speed broadband, therefore reducing the need to drive in the first instance.

Ireland is also a global leader when it comes to the management of volatile wind generated electricity on a small isolated grid. Building on this knowledge we have developed world class research and test facilities for the exploitation of ocean energy. This year we tested 22 different ocean energy prototypes, some with very promising results.

At a domestic level, this year I published Ireland's first statutory National Mitigation Plan. This puts Ireland on a clear pathway to achieve our own long-term decarbonisation targets. I have also launched Ireland's National Dialogue on Climate Action, which will ensure an inclusive process of engagement and consensus to support our transition to a low carbon and climate resilient future.

I will shortly submit Ireland's first statutory National Adaptation Framework to Government for approval which will reduce our vulnerability to the negative effects of climate change.

Small countries cannot do everything. We have unique challenges, but it also allows us to come up with unique solutions. The Paris Agreement is about action by all, the great and the small.

We need to work together to enable ambitious action, and I was proud to arrive here with agreement from my Government for Ireland to join the NDC Partnership.

Through the NDC Partnership, Ireland will be able to offer its key expertise and insights from our existing work with developing countries. This will focus on adaptation support for our developing country partners and on sharing our experiences with the world. We must share our experiences along with ensuring developing countries are resourced to take the necessary actions.

To underpin this new commitment to the NDC Partnership, the Government of Ireland will provide additional financial support totaling €2.3 million this year to the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund - Ireland's first contribution to this Fund.

I recognise the importance of strong scientific foundations for our climate policies and the key role of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

I have also decided to commit funding to the IPCC this year to help ensure that it is effectively equipped to complete the challenging work ahead of it.

Here at COP 23, I have found that my own "talanoas" with my global counterparts have shown much common ground in the challenges that we face tackling climate change. Ireland and the EU are committed to working together under the Paris Agreement to address these many challenges.

We have made real progress on developing the rulebook that will be essential for fighting climate change.

The Fijian Presidency has given us the design of a Facilitative Dialogue, or a Talanoa Dialogue, which will provide a space for both Parties and non-Party stakeholders to showcase progress for sharing best practices.

Ireland has contributed to some major breakthroughs in the development of guidance for the agriculture sector and the adoption of a Gender Action Plan. We have made good progress on transparency and on finance.

I am confident that we will meet again in Katowice, Poland, in a year to complete the design of the rulebook which will drive the action we need if we are to overcome the challenges of climate change.

Thank you.