



**Statement by Ambassador Markus Reiterer,
Secretary General of the Alpine Convention
To the high-level segment of UNFCCC COP-23 in Bonn, 16.
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Mister President, your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me commence by thanking the Government of Germany for their hospitality here in Bonn and the Government of Fiji for having taken on the enormous task of chairing this Conference of the Parties.

Climate change is affecting mountain regions particularly strongly – in the Alps the 2 °C temperature increase is already a reality. The consequences of climate change are omnipresent in our region: the glaciers receding, the permafrost declining, natural hazards on the rise – to name just a few. This vulnerability of the Alps has already been highlighted yesterday by the German president Frank Walter Steinmeier in his speech.

The Alpine Convention is the binding agreement of the eight Alpine countries and the European Union for the protection and sustainable development of the Alps. The Convention established the Alpine Climate Board to bundle together its many climate change activities, measures and projects. On this basis we are committed to adopt a system of objectives towards a Climate Neutral Alpine Space in 2050.

To take further concrete action, a Climate Partnership of Alpine Communities is now emerging. Local actors and the younger generations have a key role to play, and they need support by all levels of government.

While the Alpine environment and nature represent values that go far beyond a mere economic meaning, our economy is based to a large extent on this natural richness. People living and working in and around the Alps are exposed to the impacts of climate change, in particular on water, forests, landscapes and other natural resources. At the same time, the



Alps have an immense potential to be in the forefront of developing a CO₂-neutral or -positive and climate-resilient Green Economy. We see particular potential to reduce the CO₂ footprint of tourism and buildings.

Further to working together across the Alpine territory, we value the practical exchange of experiences with the Carpathians, the Pyrenees and other mountain ranges: we have many common issues and certainly it will pay off to work towards solutions together. This cooperation will be key to a sustainable future!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate Change is intrinsically unfair as it affects those the most, who have contributed least: the small island States and the youth. It is the youth of today that will have to live through the consequences of our actions (or lack thereof) tomorrow. Let us live up to our common responsibility.