

**COP23/CMP13/CMA2, Bonn, Germany**

**High-Level Segment**

## **Statement by Iceland**

President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate change is happening. If you want to see it with your own eyes, few places offer better proof than Iceland and its glaciers. The Vatnajökull ice cap is Europe's largest by volume, and it is shrinking, leaving iceberg-filled lagoons at its retreating edges. There is less ice in Iceland every year, and our glaciers may largely vanish in a century or two.

But perhaps more troubling are the less visible effects. Profound changes are taking place in the oceans – in temperature, currents and chemical properties. Ocean acidification is a real and serious threat to marine life. Tropical coral reefs, those famous hotspots of biodiversity, face a bleak future – literally – with heating and acidification.

Acidification affects not only the tropics, but all waters. Rapid acidification is observed in the sea around Iceland, which in the long term threatens cold-water corals, shellfish, many types of plankton and indeed the entire marine ecosystem and food chain. This is a cause for worry for Iceland, as our economy is very dependent on fisheries. Iceland has joined other countries and actors in an Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification, to help raise awareness of this hidden menace. Iceland welcomes the efforts of Fiji, as president of COP23, to highlight the plight of the sea and its role in climate mitigation and adaptation.

How can we halt ocean acidification? There is really only one solution – to halt the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Iceland remains committed to the Paris Agreement and is updating policies in order to ensure its implementation.

For electricity and heating, Iceland has already achieved an *Energiewende*, as our physical host country of Germany calls the transformation of energy systems from fossil fuels to renewables. Effectively all stationary energy comes from hydro and geothermal sources. We now must transform mobile energy use in the same way. A push towards electric cars – by tax incentives and support for charging infrastructure – is showing results. The share of electric and hybrid cars in new sales is the second highest in Europe this year, after Norway. Shipping lags behind land transport in this regard, but ships powered by electricity, hydrogen and methanol are being designed and launched. An *Energiewende* for cars and ships will not happen overnight, but is a priority in Iceland's mitigation efforts.

Sustainable management of land is crucial for both adaptation and mitigation of climate change. We need incentives for afforestation, revegetation, reclamation of drained wetlands and other actions that reduce emissions and enhance sinks.

The guidance we are developing under the Paris Agreement should help us to improve clarity in accounting for the land sector. A good rulebook, which we will have in place next year, will assist us in meaningful action in all sectors to halt climate change.

Thank you,