



**Global Power Shift
Istanbul, 27 June 2013**

**Statement by
Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Good morning to all of you. It's wonderful to be here. I am honoured by being allowed to come and I want to thank Daniel for two things:

1. That you led the singing because if Kumi or I had done it, there would've been no melody; and
2. Thank you for calling me an "elder".

I had a grandfather who had white hair since he was 25 and my aspiration has always been to have white hair. So, the fact that I'm getting white hair makes me delighted. Being called an elder is actually very exciting, so thank you very much!

I am grateful to Juan, your Peruvian colleague, who was chosen to introduce me. There are no coincidences in life. Juan not only leads the GPS movement in Latin America, he comes from the country that is going to be the host of a most important COP.

Why do I say that? Because COP 2014 is the COP that you all have to have in mind. It's not 2015. Let me tell you why. Because it's at COP 2014 in Lima Peru that governments are going to put a draft agreement on the table.

If there's anything I want you to remember about what I say today, it is that 2014 needs to be the milestone for which you plan. Please do not plan for 2015. If you plan for 2015, you are too late. We are not going to redo Copenhagen. We are going to have a very different strategy. We have to put all our effort into getting a draft agreement by 2014.

But now let me share with you my vision of the engagement you need to have in the battle against climate change. It is a vision for your generation, because I think of you every single day, believe it or not. I think about you because I have two daughters your same age, and they have the same fears and the same hopes that you do. That's why I do the work that I do. I don't do it for the elders. I do it for you.

When I think of you, I think of you as "Generation C", generation "Climate". You are the generation that is going to feel the most impacts from climate change. But, if we do our work right, you are also the generation that potentially will benefit

the most from the transformations that we must have in society to address climate change.

You stand in a very interesting confluence. You will suffer from climate impacts because the atmosphere is already loaded against your generation and we are now just working to avoid worse impacts. But if we do our work right, you will benefit from a transformation in the energy sector that is very similar to the benefits from the revolution in the telecommunication industry.

None of you will remember the first cell phone that was put out 30 years ago. It weighed 3 pounds and was called “the brick”. It was literally a brick. It took ten hours to load it. It could work for 30 minutes and then you had to load it again for ten hours, and you could only transmit voice. Now, the cell phones that you have do everything except cook your dinner.

The kind of transformation we had in the telecommunication sector is what we must have in the energy sector. The energy sector, except for some recent innovations in renewable energy, has had no real transformation in the past 30 years. It absolutely must be transformed, and you stand to benefit from that.

But the path is not an easy one. Your generation has three ways of engaging on climate change: Voice, Choice and Poise. These are not necessary sequential, but they could be. They are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but they could be. Some of you may choose to work on one, or the other. Or you may choose to work on all three at different points in your life. Let me present them in what I think is an increasing level of difficulty.

VOICE. The first is the work that you are doing here, now. I call that the work of voice. That has to do with getting your voice heard and building a nonviolent civil movement. I am truly grateful to 350.org, Greenpeace and all of the other organizations that are giving you the tools to build a climate movement. I still don’t understand why we do not have people in the streets every single day in every single capital demonstrating to get more urgent responses to climate. It is the most critical issue we all face.

All of you know already much more than I do about building a movement. And, I’m very grateful that you are dedicating your time, your hearts and your brains to building this movement, which has to be built urgently. The more we delay, the more impacts you are going to have.

CHOICE. The second type of the work is exercise the power of choice. By choice I mean exercise the power that you have as educated consumers. Don’t put up with high-carbon products. The best way to get to low-carbon living is to demand that every single product you buy be labelled to show carbon intensity. When we buy food, we know about the nutritional content in the food by the label. Why don’t we know how much carbon has gone into everything that we buy?

We must insist on labelling. We must insist on the transparency of the carbon intensity of production. We as consumers, and you as a generation that has the purchasing power that you do, you are the ones that have to demand that low-carbon

become the norm. You need to insist that every single thing you buy is labelled with respect to its carbon footprint so that you can make informed choices, and industry can cater to your choice of low-carbon. We can't afford to buy indiscriminately anymore. Frankly we will all continue to consume in some measure, but we should consume consciously. You are the generation with the future purchasing power that can force production to be transparent about its carbon footprint, and to be low-carbon.

Thirdly, the most difficult work: POISE (for lack of a better word that almost rhymes with voice and choice!) By poise I mean the need to stay calm and focused in the face of pressure. As you get ready to take over the responsibility of taking decisions for our society you will face many pressures. In order to stay calm and focused you need to understand where the pressures come from. This is the most difficult part of the work that you will need to do because it requires thorough understanding.

You will need to understand what is behind the very powerful triangle of policy, technology and finance. The interaction of policy, technology and finance is at the bottom of the transformation we seek, but is also at the base of the resistance to the change. If you really want to make a difference, you need to understand the policies that will bring about the transformation, as well as the difficulties, the barriers, to implementing those policies.

You need to understand the technologies that can take us forward and what are the difficulties of those technologies. You need to understand which are the financial instruments that are most powerful for each of these policies and technologies and what are their barriers. And once you understand these three very clearly, then you need to understand who are the winners and who are the losers in this transformation.

Because there will be winners who will be your allies, but there will be losers who will put much resistance and will want change to be impossible. You need to understand where the resistance is going to come from so you're prepared for it. So you that you can remain focused in the face of pressure, and still push on for change. Poise.

Now here is the surprise. Once you fully understand the interplay of policy, technology and finance, plus the politics surrounding them, then you cannot allow that to limit or stop you. You need to understand that the history that we have all built together is very valuable as a lesson, but it does not determine the future. You can learn from it, but you need to go beyond it.

You need to determine the future. You need to decide what is possible not based only on what has been possible in the past. You need to decide what is going to be possible for you, and that is very different from what was possible for me.

You are gathering the tools you need to move into the positions of taking the societal decisions that you want to take, that you can take and that you must take. Don't shy away from that responsibility. Get ready to act with poise and determination, because generations after you are depending on you.

And finally, I'll tell you what keeps me up at night. I see the eyes of seven generations of children down the line and they ask me, and they ask you, "What did you do"?

If we're not able to stand and say from the bottom of our hearts, "I did everything that I could," then we have no moral integrity. And, I know that you are here because you are motivated by your moral integrity.

I thank you for that.
