

Opening of the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 14)

Poznan, 1 December 2008

Statement by Anders Fogh Rasmussen

Prime Minister of Denmark

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me congratulate Poland as the host of COP14. In particular, I wish to thank Prime Minister Donald Tusk for our good cooperation. Let me also thank Indonesia as a close collaborator, and thank you for a most successful presidency.

COP14 takes place in a time of turbulence. The international financial crisis dominates the global political agenda. But we are taking action. Measures are being taken to limit the negative effects and get us back on track.

Judging from the resolve of many governments, I feel confident that the financial crisis will be overcome. Recovery will come.

However, climate change is not going to be less of a problem in the coming years. On the contrary, climate change will only grow stronger, if we do not act now.

Therefore, the financial crisis should not prevent the commitment to other urgent issues like the climate change and poverty alleviation.

The need to secure stable and affordable energy supplies remains a priority as does the need to improve energy efficiency and renewable energy.

And, combating climate change remains a key and urgent challenge. For three reasons.

Firstly, combating climate change is the right green choice.

Secondly, combating climate change is the right economic choice.

Thirdly, combating climate change is the right political choice.

We need urgent action. A global deal has to be made next year at COP15 in Copenhagen.

* * *

Climate change is a fact. We see increasing temperatures. Ice melting. Changing weather patterns. We cannot ignore that human activity and the burning of fossil fuels carries a major responsibility for this. We have to act to mitigate global warming.

We must agree to reduce global CO2 emissions by 50 per cent in 2050 compared to 1990. And we must agree on a mid-term reduction goal by 2020. The EU countries are ready to reduce emissions by 30 per cent in 2020 compared to 1990 as part of a global agreement.

The developed countries must show the way. They carry a special historical responsibility. But we need an agreement of global scale involving all nations to solve this challenge.

Secondly, Climate change is the right economic choice.

There is no contradiction between economic growth and ambitious climate policies. On the contrary, the policies needed to address climate change are the very policies that can help to rebalance and revitalize our economies.

A significant potential for future growth, employment and wealth lies within the growing global market for green technology. Green technology is a growing and profitable industry. Renewable energy and higher energy efficiency will lessen our dependence on fossil fuels. It will make our production less vulnerable to volatile energy prices.

Energy savings are not an extra expense. Money saved is money gained. And money saved on energy can be used for other productive purposes.

Turning the economy from high carbon to low carbon does not slow down growth. It creates growth.

I am delighted to see that the President-elect of the United States, Mr. Barack Obama, is planning ambitious energy and climate policies as part of the solution to the economic slowdown.

We must unite around the goal to establish low carbon societies. We need to go beyond donations, aid and subsidies. We need global markets to be the driver.

For this technological revolution to happen, a global climate agreement must set the framework and the long term perspectives. We need a global solution building on five corner stones: 1) A common goal of emission reductions, 2) a common commitment to low carbon societies with specific medium term reductions for industrialized countries, 3) world wide adaptation to climate change, 4) facilitation of green technology transfers and 5) a financial mechanism to assist the developing countries.

It is a global challenge. No one can afford not to take the low carbon road. It is our future growth path.

* * *

Finally, distinguished delegates,

A comprehensive global agreement on climate change is the right political choice.

We must secure the right conditions for continued globalization and international free trade. Based on responsible and sustainable conditions.

It is a great responsibility. You have two weeks ahead of you to make real progress in our negotiations. You need to pave the way for a global agreement at next year's COP15 conference in Copenhagen.

COP15 is our deadline. I look forward to welcoming you in Copenhagen.

And I wish you a successful two weeks here in Poznan. Thank you.