

**OPENING SPEECH BY CONNIE HEDEGAARD
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF COP15**

--- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY ---

Your Royal Highnesses, Ministers, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen: In these very hours, we are balancing between success and failure. Success is still within reach. But as COP President, I must also warn you: We can fail.

Probably without anyone really wanting it so. But because we spent too much time on posturing, on repeating positions, on formalities.

If we are going to make it – and we are! – well, then we must change gears.

We can't risk failure. No one here can carry that responsibility.

That means that the key word for the next two days must be compromise.

In the past year, people from all parts of the world, all walks of life, have raised their voice demanding action.

From the poor farmers in Mali suffering droughts and sudden showers; to Pacific Islanders already forced into exile.

From Bengali women in cyclone shelters to inuits who can no longer trust the wisdom of their ancestors.

From union leaders to CEOs; from grassroots to heads of state;
from scientists to leaders of faith, the call has been the same:
ACT! NOW! PLEASE!

Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets.

Millions have signed petitions.

Billions are out there worrying – expecting their leaders to agree on the answers to the challenge.

This is my 6th COP. At each COP I have listened to the talks, heard the many fine words and basically never understood that the steps forward had to be that small.

Much has changed over these five years. And the fact that more than 100 Heads of State and Government are joining us here in Copenhagen is the best sign of the change. Now climate has moved to the top of the international agenda. That is a fantastic and important achievement.

But now it is time to take big steps. That is the only way to overcome the seeming discrepancy between the call for action outside – and the pace of progress here inside.

Big steps. To make our work inside correspond with the expectations outside is what the next few days are all about. And in the next two days we must make the decisions that we have been preparing for the last two years. Small steps must be followed by big steps.

Denmark has taken on the presidency, in confidence of your cooperation. In the next days, we will do what is necessary to live up to the responsibility we have been given. We will do everything to live up to the trust you have shown us.

But we can't do anything without you, the parties. YOU must compromise, YOU must commit. YOU must deliver – NOW.

Not only because of the climate. There is even more at stake. This is also about the world's confidence in their global leaders' will and ability to cope with the challenges of our time.

So: Excellencies! Let's get it done!

For years, disagreement has held us back. Now, we must turn division into decision.

And remember: We are all accountable. Not only for what we do. Also for what we fail to do.

In the next three days we have a unique chance. We can choose between fame and shame. We can favour action over stalemate.

So: Let's walk those last steps! Let's get it done! Let's make history!