

My name is Mariame and I was born 16 years ago here in Marrakesh. This beautiful city that you are honouring with your presence. A city which has been for centuries at the crossroads of sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa, and at the crossroads between all religions and all cultures. Rooted in history and generously open to the world.

Like two billion young people in the world, I aspire at finishing my studies, at working in the service of my country and of all my fellow human beings, at starting a family, pursuing my citizen engagement, and traveling to discover the richness of the world.

This dream, which I share with hundreds of millions of other children of the world, of all faiths and origins, can become either a nightmare or a reality for me, my generation and future generations.

A number, amongst a multitude of available data, outlines this huge challenge. According to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, composed by international and independent experts, air pollution has killed 600 000 children under the age of 5 in 2013.

It is up to you, it is up to us to put a decisive end to such situations, and it is within our reach if the great wisdom which you showed last year in Paris stayed alive and if the watchfulness of the citizens of the world doesn't falter.

In 2015, in the space of just a few weeks, the international community adopted both the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, thus paving the way for a just ecological transition and an active solidarity towards the most vulnerable countries, mainly island States and Africa.

You can, we can, act together, for our children's dreams to come true, if you give this summit the necessary momentum.

You can, we can, avoid the wreck if we decide to see, beyond our differences, that which unites us.

"In life, there are no solutions. There are forces on the move: they have to be created and solutions will follow", wrote a long time ago a great African, come from another continent, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. These forces are gathered here in Marrakesh. It is up to you and to us to put them on the move.