

OPENING SPEECH OF THE COP19 PRESIDENT – 11.11.2013

Your excellency, President of COP18, - Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah.

Distinguished Executive Secretary of United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate Change – Madame Christiana Figueres.

Excellencies! Distinguished Delegates! Ladies and Gentlemen! Friends!

First of all I would like to thank the outgoing President of COP18, Mr Al-Attiyah for his work over the past 12 months. Without your dedication the outcome from Doha would not have been possible. Thank you.

Of course I'm not saying our tasks here will be easy ones. But this is the reality of climate negotiations and I'm aware what is ahead of me, of all of us. Just look what extremes we have to deal with.

When one part of the planet wonders why new smart phones need to be charged more often, another part of the world, and around 1.3 billion people to be precise, remains without access to electricity. And while some prepare themselves to travel to space on commercial flights, around 2.6 billion still lack access to clean cooking facilities.

If it weren't complex enough, we are all experiencing threatening climate change. Changing landscapes, forcing us from our normal ways. Killing.

Only two days ago, a powerful typhoon swept through the Philippines, claiming thousands of lives, leaving hundreds of thousands of people displaced from their homes. A great human tragedy. Unforgettable, painful, awakening.

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I say awakening because it is yet another proof that we are losing this unequal struggle between man and nature. It got the better of us yet again, and will continue to do so in the future if we do not close ranks and act together to strike back.

Climate is a global issue, global problem and global opportunity at the same time. It's also a problem if we can't act in a concerted way. It becomes opportunity when we demonstrate the ability to act together. One country or even a group cannot make a difference. But acting together, united as we are here, we can do it.

You might say: "but we are all different". Yes, but we could turn this fact to our advantage. You know very well that no-one expects us all contribute the same level of effort in this quest for better tomorrow. But there is always something each party can bring to the table. Each and every one of us has a unique strength and can offer one ingredient of the medicine that we will all make to cure our planet.

I can promise you that here in Warsaw and over the next 12 months I will spare no effort to find a consensus. This is a party driven process, but it needs a facilitator. I promise you transparency. I promise an inclusive process. These are my top priorities to create the conditions to help us lay solid foundations for the new agreement. And I am ready to play my role as is my country, Poland - known for its dedication to solidarity.

We are not alone in this. I have my colleagues from Peru and France to help me. As we very well know this is a team effort. With their help, but first

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and foremost with YOUR HELP, we can even hope to address one of the most challenging problems for humanity, such as climate change.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you a good COP.