



**Forty-fourth session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Implementation and
the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
Bonn, 26 May 2016**

**Farewell address by
Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary**

SBI Chair Mr. Tomasz Chruszczow,
SBSTA Chair Mr. Carlos Fuller,
APA Co-Chairs Ms. Jo Tyndall and Ms. Sarah Baashan,
Distinguished delegates,
Dear friends,

When I first spoke to this distinguished group as the new Executive Secretary in 2010, just six months after COP15 in Copenhagen, I invited all governments to courageously rise to the scale and urgency of what had to be done, to set the sails much higher than where they were.

Since then, over the past six years, with increasing support from non-Party actors and civil society from around the world, you have constantly trimmed the sails, grasping the politically possible at every point along the way, until in Paris last December you were able to fully capture the winds of change and put the world on a clear course toward sustainable, environmentally sound social and economic growth.

This is a course towards increased resilience and towards lower emissions. But it is also a course towards a better future for all, a safer future where growth is powered by clean energy; where growth is inclusive, fair and equitable; and where growth is sustained in all countries over generations.

As you well know and you have seen these two weeks, much work remains to be done to breathe life into the vision that you embedded into the Paris Agreement. But today, at my last engagement with you as Executive Secretary, I am filled with gratitude.

As the progress in our collective efforts is first and foremost the responsibility of national governments, my first thanks go to you, the Parties to the Climate Change Convention. To you here today, but also through you to all delegates in the past who laboured so hard for so long, my thanks for your national aspirations, my thanks for your cooperation with each other and my thanks for your collective ambition. There is no doubt that you have made history.

Among the Parties, special thanks to the seven COP presidencies that I have had the privilege to support: Mexico (*muchas gracias*), South Africa (*Baie dankie*), Qatar (*Shukran*), Poland (*dziękuję*), Peru (*mil gracias*), France (*trois mille fois merci*) and the incoming Moroccan President (*bil tawfiq Inshallah*). And most certainly to Germany, our very gracious host country (*ganz herlichen Dank*).

Now beyond national governments this has been a journey of many hands, hearts and minds from all corners of the Earth, from all sectors of society and from all races and creeds.

This journey has been supported by visionary sub-national governments, committed corporations, discerning financial institutions, and a very concerned yet hopeful civil society, orchestrating a symphony of voices representing every woman, man, youth and child. My gratitude to all of them, as they have ensured that this process of transformation is now propelled by the unstoppable drive of our shared humanity, boosted by the new recognitions of opportunity and possibility.

My thanks also to the extended UN system that has supported us all along the way and reminded us of the ultimate goals we collectively pursue – the protection of human rights and the most vulnerable, the eradication of poverty, the social and environmental building blocks of peace and the long term sustainability of growth.

And most intensely, I extend my deeply felt gratitude to the amazing staff of the climate change secretariat. When I joined the secretariat I felt that I had arrived home. Together we have further matured this institution into the high-performing organization that it is now.

I thank each and every member of the UNFCCC staff for your unwavering commitment, your tireless dedication and your collective wisdom. I shall be forever indebted to you. And I am honoured to hand over the baton to the very capable Patricia Espinosa to guide the next phase of this fantastic journey.

Many people have asked me—particularly in these last two weeks—whether I am sad to be leaving. The answer is no. I have had the enormous, unparalleled privilege to be at your side as you collectively wrote history.

Yes sharing a few—or perhaps many—tears of passion along the way, but also relishing many, many moments of utter joy. And it is precisely in this crucible of emotions and convictions that the indelible path has been forged.

You have often heard me say that impossible is not a fact, it is an attitude. It is merely an attitude. You have proven that to be true.

On the global stage of human endeavours there are many challenges that today seem as intractable as addressing climate change was just a few years ago. As I depart from these halls and head for the next, I take inspiration from your efforts and from your accomplishments.

I know that it is precisely at the points of greatest human need, that we can and must all rise to our highest sense of purpose. I have no doubt that together we will continue to do so.

Thank you.
