

National statement by

H.E. Minister of Environmental protection and regional development of the Republic of Latvia Kaspars Gerhards

8 December 2015, Paris

Dear Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Latvia, but I am sure many will agree to what I say. **We all are here to represent the voices of the world** – be it a person, animal or plant.

However, first of all please allow me to express our condolences to the people of France and to all other countries that have become victims of violence. Paris is known as the City of Light and **the COP21 now has become an evidence of the determination of nations to work together towards a better and safer future.**

Last Saturday during Climate action day many spoke about climate change. Indeed, climate change has given us a chance – a chance to honestly look at ourselves and decide how we want to be. A chance to change and ensure global transition to low carbon and climate-resilient societies and economies.

Many are speaking of different priorities, but in reality **there should be only one priority – climate change mitigation and resilience.** Let's keep that in mind! Let's focus and deliver on THIS priority!

Latvia fully accepts its commitments with regard to climate change mitigation, but our action alone will not be enough. The Paris Agreement has to be about stimulating ambitious action by all. And I really mean ALL.

Everyone must be involved! Everyone must act! The world has changed and the old binary division of countries is outdated. The Paris Agreement needs to mirror today's economic and geopolitical realities, while reflecting that still there are countries with less capabilities. Different countries have different circumstances and different possibilities. And I would like to strongly note that this is relevant with regard to all situations – also for developed countries as some of them have less possibilities than some developing countries.

After many years of negotiations this week **we must, we can** and I am confident that **we will DECIDE.** We already have the draft Paris outcome and I trust that with political will of all we can turn it into **global, ambitious, durable, legally binding international agreement that limits average global temperature increase to below 2 degrees Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels.**

Thank you!