

Speech by HE Professor Jan Szyszko

The Minister of Environment of Poland

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman

Poland attaches big attention to global climate policy. The fact, that Poland served three times already as the presidency of the Conference of Parties is the best proof of our engagement. Two COPs were held in Poland – COP14 in Poznań and COP19 in Warsaw. As a scientist and politician I am closely connected with this Convention. I was a President of COP5, initiator of COP14 in Poznań, and I also supported the organizers of COP19 in Warsaw.

Especially COP14 in Poznań and COP19 in Warsaw were of great importance as the period 2008-2012 was the timeframe for commitments and settlements arising from the Framework Convention on Climate Change and its substantial extension – Kyoto Protocol. Let me remind that, in accordance with this Convention, the developed countries were expected to reduce their CO₂-emissions by 5.2% between 2008-2012 and the goal was to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases.

Poland is a country undergoing transition period. We not only met our target, but has even overfulfilled it. The Prime Minister of Poland Beata Szydło mentioned it on the first day of this COP 21, here in Paris. Let me recall her words. *“Over the last 17 years Poland reduced the emissions of the greenhouse gases by 30% and doubled the GDP growth at the same time. And it is to emphasize, that Poland met this targets in a situation, when the primary energy source is coal and the average carbon dioxide emission per capita is one of the lowest in the European Union and among the developed countries.”*

The Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit laid down a legal foundation for the sustainable development of the world. Implementation of this idea was supposed to stop the negative impacts, related to economic development, such as worsening water quality and deteriorating air quality. We have also observed a rapid extinction of wild species, degradation of soil, deforestation and destruction of water reservoirs and of the organic carbon, such as mires. More and more people suffered because of the lack of drinking water and clean air, more and more people were affected by the unemployment and food shortage.

The legal basis for the sustainable development are the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification. The common denominator for those conventions is the raising carbon dioxide concentration in the Earth's atmosphere, which is the result of burning of the energy resources such as coal, oil and gas. Also agricultural soil degradation, destruction of large organic carbon reservoirs, such as forests and mires is related to this. The degradation of living natural assembles is the direct cause of worsening water quality and the deteriorating air quality, of the dying out of species living in the wild and of growing problem of hunger.

Although the Conventions, that we mentioned a while ago have entered into force many years ago, their targets have not been met yet. We still see the growing carbon dioxide concentration in the Earth's atmosphere, the increase of the average global temperature, the worsening water quality, the deteriorating air quality, desertification continues, species living in the wild and their population on large areas of land are dying out, other species become active and damage the environment, more and more people suffer hunger.

At this moment it is necessary to examine the reasons for our ineffectiveness and to work out a new agreement, that will effectively counteract those processes. This is why we all are here. This is also

what the Holy Father Francis said in his Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, to encourage us, so that the agreement could be accepted by all countries in the world in the name of truth, respecting their integrity and their as well as natural and economic uniqueness. It is obvious, that reduction of concentration of greenhouse gases, especially carbon dioxide in atmosphere should happen as soon as possible, as cheaply as possible and as effectively as possible while involving actions by all countries.

I would like to demonstrate example of my country - Poland. Polish major energy source is coal. Our coal recourses make up about 90% of the resources of the entire European Union. Coal builds our economic capacities and guarantees our energy security. We had to reduce the emissions and we did it by using new technologies, reaching one of the lowest per capita emissions. We would like to maintain this trend.

We would like to develop innovative combustion technologies, but we also would like to capture the carbon dioxide in order to regenerate soils, forests using innovative technologies in the ecological engineering, thus increasing biological potential of soils.

We would like to protect the biodiversity, create jobs on non-urban areas. We recognize the importance of the development of RES (renewable energy sources), but we can not agree on imposing on us the obligation to use very expensive technologies, while we have our own cheaper, more efficient resources. Just one example - the Geothermy in Toruń. One operating well can supply in one hour 500 tonnes of hot water, temperature of which exceeds 60 degrees Celsius. The heat produced is sufficient to supply warm water to 200,000 inhabitants, independently of the weather - rain, sun or wind. And I would like to mention here it is also 40,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emission avoided.

You can find more information about the Polish characteristics in the conclusions worked out on a basis of the discussion on the Encyclical of the Holy Father Francis *Laudato Si*. The conclusions are here

available. You will find it translated into dozen or so languages, including six official United Nation languages.

Thank you very much for your attention. Once again I would like to emphasize, Poland sees a great chance in the realization of the climate policy. We believe we will reach here in Paris an agreement, effective for the world and profitable for each country.

As the President of COP 5, I closed this COP saying “Humanity will not forgive us if we fail” – It won’t!

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