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Statement by

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Ms [Mr] [Vice] President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege and an honor for me to address you at this important conference.

Let me at the outset commend the Republic of Chile for successfully presiding over this anniversary of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Spain for making this conference possible here in Madrid under such a heavy time pressure.

Chile and Spain have truly demonstrated leadership by facilitating this important global dialogue at a critical time.

A quarter of a century ago we first met in this setting in Berlin.

A lot has changed since then.

The rate of climate change has increased dramatically with more severe impacts on our ecosystems, livelihood and economies.

The recent IPCC Special Reports clearly outline these negative effects.

In the past 25 years we witnessed ups and downs in our climate negotiations.

But four years ago, we sealed the historic Paris Agreement, and last year we were able to adopt the Katowice Rulebook.

These successes were unprecedented.

As we enter 2020, we need to focus our energies on transformative actions that will help us achieve our goals.

In Paris we all committed to follow a pathway towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions as well as a climate-resilient development. This pathway demands a global energy transition and rapid decarbonisation. Measures must be undertaken at all levels, be it local, regional, national or global.

The future belongs to renewable energies and energy efficiency. An ambitious and forward-looking climate and energy policy must lead to a fundamental transformation of our global energy system.

A holistic and integrative approach is needed, and a focus on solutions across sectors, for instance sector coupling in areas such as buildings and transport will be an important cornerstone.

Having said that, let me also use this opportunity to underline that for Austria nuclear power is definitely not an option to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Austria does not consider nuclear power as compatible with the concept of sustainable development. Therefore our continuous appeal is: Do not nuke the climate!

Climate action is the main priority for the Austrian government. We adopted an ambitious climate and energy strategy in 2018 and Austria is a frontrunner with regard to renewable energies.

Our aim is to cover 100% of our total electricity consumption from renewable energy sources by 2030. We are already very close to meeting our 2020 target of a 34% share of renewables in final energy consumption.

The Austrian government is also very active in the area of adaptation to climate change, working closely together with Austrian regions and local communities to strengthen resilience.

The extreme weather events a few weeks ago and its damage to infrastructure in the southern parts of Austria clearly underline the importance of adaptation measures as a second pillar of climate policies.

Turning back to the necessary transformation of the energy system: The development of new and innovative energy technologies, especially in the field of storage, is key.

In Austria, we want to be a front-runner in innovation and technology and become innovation leaders in the field of renewable “green” hydrogen.

Hydrogen produced through renewable sources have enormous potential and provides wide application possibilities. It can serve as a truly groundbreaking energy storage solution as well as revolutionize the rapid decarbonization of hard to abate sectors such as energy-intensive industries or freight transport.

In Austria, we already see important industry players making investment decisions in sustainable hydrogen. For example, the flagship project "H2Future" was starting to produce hydrogen last month in the voestalpine steel plant in Linz. It features the largest electrolysis facility in Europe to supply green hydrogen for steel production.

In Austria we count on other important opportunities as well. For example, there are subsidies in place to promote electro-mobility for households and companies. Recently the Austrian Parliament adopted a ban of heating systems with liquid fossil fuels in new buildings.

Succeeding in the fight against climate change will require ambitious efforts of all countries and stakeholders. The necessary energy transition will not be an easy task and will require constant global dialogue.

In this context, I would like to refer to the 7th Vienna Energy Forum, which will take place mid of June 2020 in Vienna. This Forum will be another opportunity to discuss and tackle issues facing the global energy community including decarbonisation options for industries or the role of new technologies.

In terms of the negotiations over the next few days, we need to leave Madrid with a robust and comprehensive set of rules on voluntary cooperation that foster global ambition, avoid double counting and ensure environmental integrity. We want a market mechanism that supports ambition, not one that undermines it.

Austria also recognizes the challenges that increasing climate change risks pose to the most vulnerable communities.

We acknowledge that more needs to be done, in particular to accelerate action on the ground, with the ultimate objective of supporting those vulnerable communities and groups.

We are sure that a successfully reviewed Loss and Damage mechanism will continue to provide a framework for all Parties, both developed and developing, to participate, contribute and cooperate for strengthening the national and global actions to avert, minimize and address loss and damage.

Let us, above all, give the signal to the world that we care about our climate! It is time for action!

Thank you.