

**Speech COP28**  
**Dubai, 2 december, 2023**

Mr. President,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have all come together here in Dubai at a crucial moment.

For me, for Belgium, and for many people I've spoken to in recent weeks, this COP is the most important since Paris.

Because, it's high time to turn our words and promises into action.

It is time to talk about solutions instead of problems! To talk about hope instead of fear!

In order to attain our goals, we need everyone on board, governments, and even more our people and private sector.

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Science tells us that : *“unless there are immediate, rapid and large scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, limiting global warming to 1.5°C will be beyond reach”*.

Even those who don't believe in science can no longer close their eyes. The climate emergency is upon us. Its effects reverberate across the globe.

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This is the reality.

But the reality is also that there are many reasons to be hopeful.

It's a fact : a record-breaking 340 billion euro have been invested in renewable energy globally this year.

It's a fact that many climate analysts believe that carbon emissions will peak in the coming years.

It's a fact ;, more and more people are on board when it comes to accelerate our actions

Young and old.

With ideals and ideas.

Academics and entrepreneurs.

Whose discoveries and technologies provide concrete and sometimes very simple answers to the challenges of recycling, water decontamination and greenhouse gas capture.

My message to you is that the climate issue belongs neither to the deniers nor to the alarmists.

It belongs to those who get up early.

To those who grab every opportunity to contribute in speeding up the transition.

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If we want to peak emissions now and reduce global emissions by 43% by 2030 compared to 1990, we need ecology **and** economy. Too often they have been opposed one against the other, while in fact they are reinforcing each other.

We will not build a climate paradise on an industrial wasteland.

In our run to net zero future by 2050, we need clean tech, green chemistry, green steel production and green construction sites.

The good news is that we're already building that future.

Our North Sea wind turbines will produce enough green offshore electricity by 2030 to cover the equivalent of the electricity consumption of 5 million households.

In Ghent, €1 billion will be invested to produce the most durable steel in the world.

And from Liège, we are revolutionizing the hydrogen industry with cutting edge technology .

What we need now is a conducive environment to accelerate progress globally. **Phasing out fossil fuels – and in this regard Belgium ended direct public finance for unabated fossil fuels – and shifting resources towards renewables will be needed in order to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency.**

**We will only reach these goals when innovations and good practices** will be accessible to everyone. To all SMEs, to all households, in every corner of the world.

In Europe we need to create the right incentives to support our economy in realizing this ambition. As the incoming president of the European Union this will be my priority.

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Europe will obviously not win the Climate race alone.

Partnerships are crucial.

Especially with Africa, which harnesses 40% of the global solar energy potential and – as stated by President Ruto of Kenya at the African climate summit – has the potential to become the green engine of the world

Belgium has already partnered up with countries such as Namibia, Morocco, and Egypt to accelerate this green revolution.

In wind, in solar, in hydrogen.

We have increased our climate finance to approximately 150 million.  
Focusing our efforts on biodiversity and sustainable development.

In the Sahel region, we are implementing a 5-year 50 million euros program supporting the Great Green Wall initiative.

We are exploring innovative instruments such as debt for climate swaps.

In Mozambique, such instrument will facilitate the implementation of the national loss and damage strategy.

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Mr. President,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We're only going to get this under control if we work together,  
And if our citizens engage in creating a more prosperous, more inclusive and  
healthier society.

The most important result of COP28 that I would hope for,  
is to create this dynamic of action and trust.

Trust that “WE”,  
governments together with our industry, our farmers AND everyone,  
will be able to achieve the Paris Agreement goals.

But for that, we need....to scale up the solutions that are in front of our eyes

Show what we're already capable of,

and create this safe space to accelerate our efforts.

I thank you.