

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
AT THE UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE [COP26]
GLASGOW, 2 NOVEMBER 2021**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to convey my deep appreciation and sincere congratulations to the Government of the United Kingdom for hosting COP26, as well as the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change for organising this extremely important and timely Conference for averting the challenges associated with climate change.

Challenges that are global and can only be mitigated if we all act together, with a sense of utmost urgency and joint commitment towards enhancing joint action and accelerating global transformation to a low carbon and climate resilient society.

Our target towards this goal was clearly identified six years ago at COP21 in Paris, when we collectively pledged to cut greenhouse emissions so as to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared with pre-industrial times.

However, currently, and we have to be honest so as to strengthen our efforts in fulfilling our promises, there is no sign that we are growing back greener, since not only planetary warming is accelerating, but we are witnessing around the globe protracted heat waves, devastating fires and deforestation, increased water scarcity, droughts, floods and extreme weather patterns.

That is why I have no doubt that COP26 can and should prove to be the historic milestone in the efforts to address the said devastating impacts, by ensuring the highest possible commitment from all participating countries, in a way that is fair, efficient and transparent, whilst maintaining solidarity towards vulnerable countries that will be severely affected.

For these exact reasons, Cyprus fully endorses and supports the initiatives and declarations of COP26, namely:

- 1. The Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use;**
- 2. The Global Coal-to-Clean Power Transition Statement;**

3. The Declaration on accelerating the transition to 100% zero emission cars and vans;

4. As well as the US initiative: The Global Methane Pledge Initiative and the Greening Government Initiative.

Further, in addition to our commitment to adhering to the targets of the said Declarations and Initiatives, Cyprus also remains fully committed to take all necessary measures so as to achieve the Paris Agreement and the EU targets, with the aim of achieving a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050.

To this end, and as a first step in accomplishing these ambitious but highly-needed goals, my country will allocate more than 500 million euro up until 2026, adopting new policies and measures as regards using cleaner fuels - such as natural gas and renewable energy sources - and promoting necessary investments in the relevant areas of Transport, Agriculture, Industry, Land Use and Forestry and Waste Management.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Honourable Guests,

As a small country, we do acknowledge that our national contribution towards tackling the impacts of climate change is indeed limited.

We, therefore, seek to enhance regional cooperation through coordinated synergies and sharing best practices, taking into account that the Mediterranean and Middle East is classified as a global “climate change hot-spot”.

Within this framework, we have undertaken the initiative of developing a Regional Action Plan, with the involvement of more than 240 scientists from our wider region, as well as various international organisations, who are already preparing policy recommendations, measures and specific solutions.

With the finalisation of the scientific part of the Action Plan which will establish the foundations of our future steps, within the coming months we will hold a Ministerial Meeting and a Leaders’ Summit that will initiate appropriate coordination and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of our commitments.

Dear Friends,

We are compelled, and people expect from us, to take on urgent action to address climate change and I am certain that you will agree with me that the time to act is upon us.

Our vision should be none other than to look to the future with optimism and to use the climate challenge as an opportunity to proudly demonstrate what all countries, what humanity can achieve when we join forces.

I have no doubt that by decisively cooperating and acting together, with unity and greater urgency, we will be able to overcome the dire consequences of a warming planet and bring forward the necessary changes for a sustainable future, so as for our generation and the coming ones to enjoy better health and living conditions, improved air quality and a green environment.

Thank you for your attention.