

Resumed High Level Segment

Statement of Iceland

Delivered by Svandís Svavarsdóttir, minister of food, agriculture and fisheries

Mister President

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

The science is clear.

Recently new reports, there among publications from the IPCC and UNEP, all state the same scientific evidence, the stark reality of climate change.

We are already seeing shocking extreme weather events around the globe. We see extensive water shortages from shrinking glaciers and snowpack; global sea-level rise from ice sheet and glacier loss; and wildfires, floods and, landslides.

But these are just a mild prelude to the catastrophes ahead if we do not act now and act fast.

Tomorrow, Iceland and Chile, will launch, an initiative called “Ambition on Melting Ice” where at least 16 countries have confirmed their willingness to join.

The initiative has a clear goal to protect the frozen areas on our earth, through vigorous climate action. It is not only a matter for mountain and polar nations alone: it is a matter of urgent global concern. All of us need to make it a priority to reduce emission, this is a matter of urgency. As a part of this important path the Icelandic government has decided not to issue any licenses for oil exploration in Iceland’s exclusive economic zone. Further, the Icelandic government will propose to Parliament to ban all oil exploration within the economic zone of Iceland.

The science tells us that the changes will be vastly greater if we don't manage to keep warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius. This fact alone should inspire us to cut emissions.

Iceland has set itself an ambitious independent national target of a 55% reduction in emissions for which Iceland is directly responsible for by 2030, compared to 2005 levels. Iceland also participates in reaching an 55% reduction target in emission with Norway and the EU.

Iceland emphasizes that we must keep the goal on 1,5°C alive, but as it stands we are heading the wrong way.

While we need to lower our emissions to resist climate change, we also need to adapt to those changes already occurring and that will magnify in the future. As a part of this important path the Icelandic government has decided not to issue any licenses for oil exploration in Iceland's exclusive economic zone. Further, the Icelandic government will propose to Parliament to ban all oil exploration within the economic zone of Iceland.

Adaptation is an increasingly important issue for Iceland, both domestically and internationally. Iceland has increased contributions to international climate finances with special emphasis on adaptation and will continue to do so.

Among Iceland's biggest threats from climate change are ocean acidification, melting ice, both glaciers and permafrost, sea-level rise, and changes in precipitation. This affects ecosystems and biodiversity on which we base our societies. Iceland underscores the importance of building adaptation measures on scientific grounds and the best possible information available with the broad participation of stakeholders and local communities.

Food systems are an example of the transboundary implications, as many countries are reliant on products from multiple parts of the world. Iceland is an example of this, with a geographical setting in the middle of the North Atlantic and reliant on imported food and supplies for food production.

Ladies and gentlemen. Knowing that, here is the place where we can really make changes.

Let's be those who are remembered for taking responsibility, be brave and let's be the catalyst of change!