

Excellencies,

We are living through perilous times.

In a world ravaged by war and destructive weather patterns we need an agreement here in Baku to give hope for a peaceful future.

Only last week, we heard from our colleagues in the WMO that 2024 looks set to be the hottest year on record. Breaking the record set only last year.

June this year marked the twelfth consecutive month that the global average temperature breached 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

We need to get renewed support for the Paris Agreement at COP this year.

Giving up would be unforgiveable, but success can help restore belief in multilateralism and restore confidence. The prize is not just to stop runaway climate but also to develop a new economy which delivers better sustainable development for all.

We need to listen to our scientists. We need to listen to our partners in developing countries when they tell us what they need and we need to see the whole world take seriously the consensus that was reached last year at COP28 in Dubai on transitioning away from fossil fuels.

Climate change is not something that happens in the future somewhere over there. It is here right now, and it is already impacting on all of our lives, in particular the lives of the most vulnerable in the poorest countries in the world who have had the least responsibility for harmful emissions.

Ireland is not immune to climate change. Our small island is becoming warmer and wetter. We see increased rainfall and flooding, affecting our towns, villages and farmland. Marine heatwaves threaten our biodiversity, and higher sea-levels and increased coastal storms lead to further erosion of our coastlines. One of the most concerning impacts of climate change for us is the risk of the collapse of the AMOC, or the Atlantic Meridional Overturn Circulation, which brings warmer waters to our high latitude shores. If it was to weaken or to

collapse – which scientists are now saying could be happening faster than expected - it would mean that our temperate climate would disappear, and we would be faced with freezing temperatures, affecting our agriculture, our food security, and our entire way of life.

While this is happening off our own shores, we are witnessing the devastating loss of life, livelihoods and nature, being caused by the opposite impact of climate change - extreme heat, wildfires, tropical storms and flooding.

Ireland is taking action.

Ireland's plan and vision for change is set out in our yearly Climate Action Plans, which chart our course to a 51% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 and ultimately, together with our partners in the EU, to the achievement of net zero by 2050.

In 2023, we reduced national emissions by 6.8% year on year, against the background of a rising population and a thriving economy, showing that it is possible to decouple emissions and economic growth – one does not have to come at the expense of the other. This year, we saw a further decrease in emissions in the first quarter, which is a positive sign that the ship is turning.

Increasingly we will see that the adoption of sustainable solutions will be the key driver of economic stability and growth, with investment in

green energy providing a cheap, secure and reliable source of power for a global community, sharing in prosperity and fostering peace.

The heartbeat of this will be renewable energy. We must all implement the energy package agreed in Dubai last year and close the chapter on the fossil fuel era for good.

We recognise that developing country partners will need support to make this transition and to adapt to the impacts of climate change we are already seeing. At an earlier negotiation round in Baku last month I heard a representative from the African Union make an impassioned plea: “We don’t want freebies but we do want fairness.”

Access to quality, reliable and accessible finance needs to be ensured, especially for the Least Developed Countries and the Small Island Developing States. That is why at COP26, Ireland committed to providing €225M in climate finance by 2025, more than doubling our climate finance provided since 2020 and we will achieve this target on schedule.

Recognising the importance of quality finance, Ireland's bi-lateral climate finance is entirely grant based and over 80% is directed to adaptation, whether in whole or in part. This includes a strong focus on providing resources on Loss and Damage.

We know that increasing the share of public finance being directed to adaptation is a core ask and a vital need for many countries here – Ireland supports this fully.

We also want to see as much money as possible flowing to where it is needed the most and other sources of finance are vital to this. A mosaic of solutions – including private, philanthropic, domestic and innovative sources will all be needed. Globally, our international financial architecture must be transformed and all financial flows must be aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Bringing climate action and development together is at the heart of Ireland's and the European Union's position. The key to success in



these negotiations will be on building trust so that we can deliver that fairness.

That is the task that faces us this week. We have to come together, to build trust, to ensure fairness and to make progress so that we can continue to build on the momentum we built last year.

The stakes have never been so high, but I believe we can meet the challenge of climate change by working together – finding global solutions for a global problem - transforming the risks of today into the opportunity for our future.