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Address of UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa at Opening of High Level Segment of COP25

Excellencies,
Ministers,
Honourable Guests,
Delegates,

I begin by thanking the governments of Chile and Spain for working together in the spirit of inclusive multilateralism to make COP25 possible.

While we may not *physically* be in the Latin American and Caribbean region, its spirit and leadership steer these discussions.

I also thank the Madrileños who have opened their doors and hearts to the more than 25,000 of us who—at the last moment—decided to visit during the holiday season!

Ministers, we've had productive first week, and an ambitious schedule remains. This High-Level Segment of COP25 is especially important.

Secretary-General Guterres said last week that humanity faces two paths: one of surrender and one of hope.

The scientific evidence overwhelmingly shows we're not on the right path. Instead, we're going in the wrong direction.



The IPCC reports that the Latin America and Caribbean region has warmed 0.7°C to 1°C since the 1970s.

Nations there have been among the most impacted by extreme weather events, including Honduras, Haiti, Dominica and Nicaragua, setting some economies back decades.

In 2019, Hurricane Dorian smashed into the Bahamas, leaving a trail of devastation throughout the region; a monster storm that Secretary-General described as “category hell”.

Drought conditions are worsening existing challenges in the region, such as increased hunger, growing poverty and forcing migration.

It is one region in a world facing a climate emergency.

Last year we received three reports from the IPCC telling us we’re poisoning the very elements that keep us alive on this planet.

Meanwhile, governments continue to subsidize fossil fuel industries, our overall consumption habits have little changed, and the UNEP Gap Report show that emissions continue to rise.

We are not acting quickly enough to enact the deep transformation throughout society that will save humanity’s future on this planet.



This year marks the 25th anniversary of UN Climate Change. Each year at the COP we're told that the window of opportunity could close...soon.

Ministers, the window of opportunity is closing *now*.

On both a professional and personal level, my message to you is this:

We need your decisions. We need your leadership. We are out of time.

I remain optimistic. Let us not forget that the Paris Agreement, a covenant of hope with the people of the world, entered into force *ahead* of schedule, in record time, and remains an unprecedented multilateral success story.

Last year's adoption of its Work Program began to unleash the power of the Paris Agreement, allowing nations to focus on implementation and building climate ambition.

Because of your work, the cornerstones of the Paris Agreement are in place and fully functioning.

We look to the Constituted Bodies, such as the Consultative Group of Experts, the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture, and The Katowice Committee of Experts on the impacts of implementation of response measures.



Transparency has been boosted. The Paris Agreement and the Katowice package laid out a clear road map for the transition by Parties to the Enhanced Transparency Framework—the ETF—after 2020.

Several developing countries have started planning for the implementation of the ETF, and we've seen a rise in national transparency reports.

We've also seen progress with respect to REDD++, which was not only incorporated into the Paris Agreement, but is now flourishing.

It moved from just a negotiated *concept* to a fully functioning funding- and capacity-building tool of the Convention and Paris Agreement.

Transparency has built trust. The Green Climate Fund has in 2019 provided REDD++ results-based payments amounting to \$229 million with more in the pipeline for 2020.

And most elements under Article 12 *are already complete and functioning*. This includes the Indigenous and Local Communities, Platform, the Gender Platform, and ACE, which empowers youth and the public to take climate action.

The Paris Agreement is operational and delivering on its promise. But some work remains. You are tasked with finalizing Article Six here at COP25 to make it complete.



We know that ambition and action to address the climate emergency is needed in every part of the economy. Article 6 of the Paris Agreement is essential to responding to that urgent need.

It's the only part of the Paris Agreement that directly engages with the private sector, helping them contribute to climate action and, ultimately, to the implementation of NDCs.

And Article Six is designed so that mitigation under its umbrella can help to also increase support to adaptation. This will help address the persistent imbalance between mitigation and adaptation finance.

Operationalizing Article Six will also help get carbon markets up and running in support of the Paris Agreement and ensure that the rules are the same for everyone.

Failure to operationalize Article Six risks fragmenting those markets and sends a negative message that can undermine our overall climate efforts.

Ministers, we recognize that a lot of technical work on this issue will remain for the future...but an agreement here in Madrid is crucial.

We've made progress in the last few days, but we need to push on and finalize our work.



2020 is only a few weeks away—the year when we must see more climate ambition reflected in new and revised NDCs. Without them, our window of opportunity closes.

Let us then achieve a successful outcome here in Madrid and let us forge a new path, a better path, *a path of hope* to 2020 and beyond.

Thank you.