

ADDRESS BY
THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
H. E. DR. NATAŠA PIRC MUSAR

AT THE COP28 – PLENARY

Dubai, 1 December 2023

Mr. President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me thank the United Arab Emirates for hosting us in Dubai, wish you, Mr. President, every success in leading the conference, in which you can count on Slovenia's full support. The eyes of the world are upon us.

Two summers in Slovenia; two catastrophes. Catastrophic fires raged last summer, while this summer two-thirds of Slovenia was flooded. Other countries around the world experienced similar disasters. Somewhere hurricanes were raging, elsewhere droughts, while in other parts floods were wreaking havoc on people's homes.

Extreme and rapidly changing weather patterns everywhere are a wake-up call. At least I hope so. A wake-up call that time is running out on mitigation and a wake-up call that much more resilient adaptation is needed to withstand the "new normal".

next page

How do we stay within the 1.5? The answers, ladies and gentlemen, are on the table.

First and foremost, we need to agree on the phase-out of fossil fuels and of fossil fuel subsidies. If production of coal continues to rise to 2030 and of gas and oil to 2050, we do not stand any chance of remaining within the 1.5 goal.

The fossil fuels phase-out needs to go hand in hand with tripling our renewable energy capacity and doubling energy efficiency.

We must pursue nature-based solutions to the maximum extent possible in developing resilient and sustainable adaption measures. Nature is our best ally in fighting climate change. Let us not forget this! ***next page***

Ladies and gentlemen,

Next week we will mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A new set of human rights is emerging – human rights of and for future generations. This new set of rights is driven by climate change and by our reckless attitude towards nature. The right to a clean and healthy environment, the right to water, the right to clean air. And, as many countries would agree, the imperative is and must be climate justice! The green transition must include those most vulnerable among us. My country is ready to contribute. We have already pledged to considerably raise our contribution to the Green Climate Fund.

I must also mention another serious impediment to progress in reducing the climate crisis, one that tends to be overlooked. There are numerous, far too many, armed conflicts around the globe. These wars are deadly primarily for the people affected, but not only for them, also for their environment and ecosystems. Gaza today is a devastating humanitarian catastrophe and an ecological disaster. As is Ukraine. As are all the other conflicts around the world. Every conflict takes its toll not only on the civilians – it also severely compromises their environment. Should we not be asking ourselves every single day what is going to bring us, humanity, a better future? ***next page***

Excellencies, are we aware of the fact that we have only one war to wage, only one war that really makes sense? And that is war on the climate crisis, on biodiversity loss and on environmental pollution.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Recently, there was an incident when some eco protesters attempted to obstruct an alpine ski race. While the incident was unpleasant, the apology of one of the young protesters involved was heart-breaking: “We protest because we do not know what

else we can do.” Indeed: what else *can they do*, ladies and gentlemen? If COP after COP after COP we – who were elected by the people to lead them into a better future – refuse to listen to their pleas? What kind of leaders are we? And what kind of people are we if we do not listen? Even worse, with us not doing enough, we simply pass the obligations to the generations to follow us, knowing they will be in a much worse position to react. Is this fair, is this responsible? We all know the answer.

Thank you. ***end***