NATIONAL STATEMENT – COP 22 November 16 2016

Thank you, Mr. President.

Ireland supports the statements made on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

I would like to congratulate our Moroccan hosts for their warm welcome and facilitating our deliberations over these two weeks.

This time last year we were heading into COP 21 with high hopes for a successful outcome. The Paris Agreement has given us all a vision of what is possible when we work together towards a common goal. We must ensure that the spirit of togetherness, the global ambition, and the sense of the urgency of the challenge we all face, remain undimmed as we set out to implement the agreement.

My primary focus recently has been to secure the formal ratification of the Paris Agreement in Ireland. As Ireland's first Minister for "Climate Action", incorporating responsibility for both the environment and energy, I steered Irish ratification through Parliament, completing the process on the 4th of November. Over one hundred Parties have now signed the Agreement - this level of commitment is most certainly a cause for celebration but also a timely reminder of the expectations placed upon us all as we move ahead with implementation. This is not a time to retreat from the challenge – now more than ever is a time for action.

The Paris Agreement provides the framework to link global commitment with national and local action. Our collective efforts over these two weeks, has presented an opportunity to build on this framework in terms of integrating Nationally Determined Contributions into actions at national level. Putting these actions into practice will, I believe be one of the key legacies of this COP.

While the Paris Agreement was being adopted, we in Ireland were also marking a historic milestone with the passing into statute of our Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, which is Ireland's first ever legislation dealing with Climate Change and which ultimately provides a National Framework to turn commitment into action.

I am now fully focused on the challenge of implementation, and I intend within the next six weeks to take a number of ambitious actions in my own country:

- I will publish Ireland's first Annual Transition Statement under our Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act

- I will also bring Ireland's first National Mitigation Plan to public consultation to ensure our citizens can contribute to this process and inform the actions identified by key sectors in developing a coherent and effective plan
- This will be a key part of Ireland's National Climate Dialogue which I will formally launch in 2017
- I will also publish in the coming weeks an initial consultation on a Clean Air Strategy for Ireland with a view to developing an ambitious plan in line with EU policy that seeks to protect our citizens' health, and that fully recognises the interlinkages between our energy use and the quality of the air we breathe.
- In terms of renewable energy, I intend to consult further on a renewable heat incentive, and to give details of a joint venture between two of our semi-state companies that seeks to optimise the supply and management of sustainable biomass in Ireland

I am also prioritising a National Adaptation framework to ensure we address climate resilience in terms of our long term planning out to 2050 and beyond.

These are examples of the all-important links between our global goals here at the UNFCCC and the actions to be taken at the national level in meeting our respective challenges for effective transition to low carbon climate resilient economies. In this regard it will be hugely important that we have the support of civil society if we are to succeed in our objectives. As I already stated, Ireland intends to initiate a National Dialogue on Climate Change in 2017. Participation of our youth will be central to this. It is they who will inherit the consequences of our actions today, and our collective ambition cannot fail them. They will live in the transformed sustainable economy of the future, underpinned by green growth and jobs. However, in making this enormous transition, we must also be mindful of today's reality. We must harness the potential of the green economy to create alternative jobs for those working in industries that over time will become displaced. In my own country, we are planning a transition from peat-fired electricity generation to generation supported by indigenous sustainable biomass. New jobs will replace old, and our rural communities will be sustained and prosper. It is only if we manage the change in this way that we will maintain the faith of civil society and bring people with us. As events this year have shown, this faith can become undermined with challenging consequences.

We are all striving to implement climate actions and face a wide range of differing challenges in doing so and within this context we can share our experiences of climate action through the capacity building structures that are underpinned by the architecture of the Paris Agreement.

Ireland has a strong historical record of supporting developing countries across a range of areas such as climate justice, human rights, and gender. In particular, Ireland has been

strongly committed supporting climate adaptation. We will continue supporting our partners to integrate climate adaptation in development plans, particularly in social protection, disaster risk reduction, and strengthening agriculture and food systems.

We will continue to work to help strengthen the resilience of vulnerable households and communities. We have strengthened our contributions to the Least Developed Countries Fund, putting in place multi-annual arrangements and we will make good on our commitments to the Green Climate Fund by initiating contributions later this year with further contributions to come from 2017 onwards.

Building on the Paris Agreement and creating the structures which will enable all parties to tackle global temperature rise, will send the signal to the world that the ambition which led to the Paris Agreement is not an end in itself but represents a new beginning in terms of driving climate action.

We simply cannot jeopardise the livelihoods of today's children and tomorrow's generations and I wish us all a successful outcome for COP 22 in terms of mapping out a clear path to realise this ambition.

Thank you Mr President