COP 22/CMP 12/CMA 1, Marrakech, Morocco

High-Level Segment

Statement by Iceland

President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is great to be here in the historic city of Marrakech. Paris gave us a new text to work from and unite our efforts against climate change. Now is the time to fulfil the promise we have given to ourselves - a time of action for national and local governments, business, scientists, everyone.

Clean energy is key in fighting climate change. The good news is that renewable energy is growing fast, and its cost is coming down. But we need still faster progress and more innovation.

Iceland has long been a champion for geothermal energy. It brings climate-friendly energy from the internal heat of the Earth. We can now also pump carbon dioxide into the Earth in geothermal plants. An experiment in Iceland shows that dissolved carbon dioxide can be turned into solid minerals in basalt rock, deep underground. This successful experiment, which was presented here in Marrakech, is an example of green innovation, which we urgently need.

Yes, we can turn carbon dioxide into stone. But we can also store carbon in trees and soil. In Iceland we are turning back centuries of deforestation. We are also making efforts to halt emissions from drained wetlands. Worldwide we need to fight desertification and conserve forests and soils. Action in forestry and land use must be part of our efforts under the Paris Agreement.

The impacts of climate change on the ocean are clear. I am pleased about the focus on oceans here, including on the Oceans Action Day. Clean ship technology is being developed in Iceland and elsewhere. I am hopeful that a roadmap for greener shipping and fisheries in Iceland will bring progress in this area.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have now with us the spirit of Paris and momentum of Marrakech. But we can not take success for granted. We need all aboard. We need the full involvement of women and men. It is my firm belief that empowering women unlocks new potential. We need changes not just in technology, but in everyday life. To take one example: Food waste is a big climate issue, which we need to address. Gender equality is a question of rights, but it will also help the world become greener.

Our task is huge, but doable. Iceland will continue its work on a greener economy and low-carbon future. We see that we are in good company here, and I will leave the beautiful city of Marrakech in an optimistic mood.

Thank you,