


CLIMATE SUMMIT FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEADERS, MARRAKECH

**Plenary Session: For a Climate Finance Directed to Local & Regional
Governments**

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Ladies and gentlemen, let me firstly thank everyone who has worked so hard to make today's conference happen. It is an honour to be with you today.

I am the President of the European Committee of the Regions - the EU's institutions of 700 locally and regionally elected politicians from every corner of Europe. We represent the voice of regions and cities in the EU.

I originally come from a town in Lapland in the north of Finland, best known as the home to Santa Claus. Today, I stand before you as a concerned father, husband and politician. Even in Lapland not everyone believes in Father Christmas. But everyone in Lapland believes in climate change – we see it every winter and every summer.

The world is as small as the challenges are great. Burning coal not only damages the health of my community, it affects the livelihood of a family across the oceans. When emission-free buses are introduced into our city, it creates jobs and protects the health of us all.

Building walls won't stop us breathing the same air.

That's why Paris made history. Yet under current targets the world's temperatures are still expected rise by more than 3°C.

Pulling back on this agreement would be even more catastrophic.

Those who believe climate change is a hoax cannot deny our world is getting warmer. They cannot deny the economic benefits of investing in reducing our waste, using clean energy and smart technology.

For us local leaders, better air quality, lower energy costs, improved transport systems and green growth is common sense.

That's why my first challenge for you to spread support for a zero-carbon world by 2050.

In Paris the role of local and regional governments was recognised. Today, we must demand more.

Why? Because local authorities are responsible for implementing more than 70% of climate change reduction and up to 90% of adaptation measures. Because we are ready to share technology, monitor progress and let our global leaders know whether we are on the right track. We know what works and what doesn't.

My second challenge to you is to tell your national governments that they must bring cities and regions into the UN's climate governance. Tell them they this holds the key to delivering the Paris promises.

Let me take the example of the European Covenant of Mayors. In Europe the Covenant has mobilised more than 7000 cities and towns who have voluntarily committed to go beyond the EU's carbon emission targets. If contributions from the Covenant and all other initiatives taking place across the world were included within the National Determined Contributions, we will deliver more.

Next year the Covenant will go global becoming the largest climate coalition of cities in the world. **My third challenge to you is to join the 7,100 cities from six continents and sign up to the Global Covenant of Mayors.**

Bringing the local level into the international negotiation process and not as a mere observer is nothing new. The UN Convention on Biological Diversity does it so why not for climate?

Local governments are also faced with limited funds at a time when we really need more investment. Public money will never be enough which is why we need private investment directed towards the right sectors. Our investment needs to be lean, clean and green.

That's why locally we need to invest smart, think green and be innovative. Where I come from in Finland, we already have an app which shows house-buyers the energy efficiency of the property. You can check the insulation before you even go through the door.

With the European Commission, we are also encouraging regions and cities across Europe to develop their own sustainable investment plans. To create smart local economies of the future. One of our members, Ahmed Aboutaleb - the Mayor of Rotterdam - has already begun this process.

We want to scale this up to build a new smart economy transforming our regions and cities, their transport, energy and infrastructure. We need to share our wisdom to use the latest innovation entrepreneurs have to offer. To light our buildings with solar energy and drive our buses using green fuel.

Conclusion

Paris was historic but it isn't enough. We need to accelerate our efforts. Local government can make or break the success of the agreement so I challenge you to tell governments that you are ready to shoulder the burden but we need to be a partner in the process.

For cities and regions we need to strengthen our partnerships, build stronger alliances and cooperate across continents and regions.

We need to empower our communities and businesses to demonstrate the tangible of taking action, however small.

Climate change is not only responsibility of national leaders. It is our collective responsibility. All of us in this room. Our families. Our friends. Our communities.

Someday, our children, and our children's children will look ask us, what did you do to protect our world? What did you do to keep protect the

snow for Santa's reindeer, to protect us from the tsunami or keep our houses standing during the earthquakes?

I hope our answer is that we worked together and were decisive, united and innovative.

And we made a difference.

End

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