

Ladies and gentlemen

Climate Change has become a reality much faster than all scenarios predicted. Climate change is not just an environmental issue, as too many people still believe. It is an all-encompassing threat, to health, to agriculture, to peace and security, to the very ground millions of people live on, to the global economy. We are now at a point where even the last government has given up denying this reality. Storms, droughts and rising sea levels are bleak signs of what we are facing. Large regions will become uninhabitable because they will be either flooded or get hardly any rainwater at all. Developing countries are going to suffer disproportionately if the global community continues the game that almost everybody waits for someone else to take action. As Kofi Annan said when he opened the Nairobi climate conference in November, there remains a frightening lack of leadership on climate change.

The new IPCC assessment report says that humanity has time until 2020 to reverse the path of constantly growing GHG emissions. If we don't act in these remaining 13 years dangerous climate change will become irreversible.

All governments sitting here are signatories to the UNFCCC and that means you are legally obliged to a »*stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system*«.

Yet listening to the energy debate yesterday it seems that many governments do not take this commitment seriously. We cannot burn all existing fossil fuels if we want to avoid a climate disaster. The policies promoted by many governments yesterday clearly favour the further expansion of the fossil energy system and put renewable alternatives on the sidelines. Such policies are incompatible with a stabilization of the GHG emissions. Again I would like to quote Kofi Annan: *The question is not whether climate change is happening but whether, in the face of this emergency, we ourselves can change fast enough.*

Countries that have made the energy revolution their political priority have clearly demonstrated that this creates more jobs than fossil fuels, they have enjoyed more economic growth and it puts those countries in the vanguard of the future energy technology markets. But those countries that are now listening to the tune of the fossil lobby will be paying dearly in the decades to come. And this applies both to industrial and developing countries alike. Countries are now deciding whether they are going to import the windmills, solar panels and efficiency technologies in the future, just as they do import petroleum now, or whether they will create their own booming renewable energy markets.

The CSD needs to send a clear signal to the climate talks that will continue in May in Bonn during the second week of the CSD and in December in Bali that it expects a swift official start of the negotiations for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol with deeper and more comprehensive commitments. The environment ministers face a lot of resistance on this path. When the Secretary-General is already thinking of a special summit on climate change, it would be embarrassing if the CSD would let them down. Thank you.