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STATEMENT

Message by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini on today's European Climate Diplomacy Day

Protecting our environment is the big challenge of our times, not just of one day. Still, each and every day matters. And this Climate diplomacy day is an opportunity we cannot miss.

2015 is a decisive year for climate negotiations. This coming December we will gather in Paris to conclude a new global, legally binding agreement which will help us keep on the path to a sustainable future. Our best efforts are needed to make Paris successful. The time to act is now.

Climate change does not belong to a remote future. It is all around us. It affects us directly. It is already impairing our security environment. The increasing scarcity of natural resources is becoming a major source of conflict and instability. In today's wars, a dam is at times more strategic than an oil refinery. Floods and droughts can force entire populations to leave their homes and put their lives in the hands of human traffickers.

The EU feels the urgency of the moment. We are addressing the emergency all around the world, by helping the most vulnerable communities to adapt to climate change. Climate diplomacy day is an opportunity to share the stories of the small islands in the Pacific Ocean that are becoming more resilient to water scarcity, or of the Ethiopian farmer who is finally making a living from his field thanks to climate-smart agriculture. Our actions matter to them. We have the power to make a difference.

As we make headway for the people affected by a changing environment today, let us not forget to look further. Tackling climate change is a moral duty towards our children. Leading the way towards a more sustainable future is the right thing to do for Europe. And that is what we are doing. We established a comprehensive system of environmental protection covering all aspects from energy efficiency to the reduction and recycling of waste, the management of water bodies, the conservation of natural habitats. We have put forward an ambitious emissions' reduction target on which we are already delivering. Our aim is to achieve at least 40% domestic greenhouse gas emission reductions on 1990 levels by 2030. But our continent accounts only for around 9% of global emissions: while our lead is vital, and our responsibility higher, teamwork will be even more important/this can only be a collective effort.

Reducing greenhouse emissions calls for a truly global alliance. Governments will have to be mobilised, as much as grassroots. The EU Delegations – our embassies to the world – will use Climate diplomacy day to reach out to our partners, to the general public, to the business community, to civil society organisations. Everyone can do their part. And everyone must do their part, for this is not just something that concerns cabinets and institutions. It is the battle of all present and future generations. It is a matter of survival. It is our responsibility.

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