



European Union Delegation to Thailand

Global Joint Action Day on Climate Change 09 September 2014

Excellencies,
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

Sa-wad-di kha - Good morning

It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you to the ***Global Joint Action Day on Climate Change***, an event jointly organised by the European Union Delegation, the British Embassy and the German Embassy, in partnership with the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. This is our joint effort in fostering the importance of climate change issues and challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The changes that our planet has undergone throughout its history are a result of natural factors like tiny changes in the Earth's path around the sun, volcanic activity and fluctuations within the climate system. However, humans are having an increasing influence on our climate by burning fossil fuels, cutting down rainforests and farming livestock.

The 5th IPCC report released in April 2014 has confirmed the impact of human activities on climate change and the growing impacts of climate change across all continents. The report also alerted the international community on the major risks of delaying drastic efforts to mitigate GHG emissions and scale up adaptation actions.

The truth of the matter is that global warming is a fact, it is happening. Each of the past three decades has been warmer than the previous one. The global temperature has been higher than the 20th century average every year since as far back as 1976. Of the 14 warmest years on record since 1880, 12 have been since the year 2000.

The effects of climate change are being felt on all continents of the world and these impacts are predicted to intensify in the coming decades and they will not be experienced in isolation, but will affect humans in the context of the way we live. These will also be illustrated in the Human Dynamics of Climate Change map which is being launched by my colleague of the British embassy today.

To prevent dangerous climate change, the international community has agreed that we must keep warming below 2° Celsius, or 3.6° Fahrenheit. This is technically feasible and it is economically affordable. But the window of opportunity is closing fast. The longer we delay the more expensive and difficult it will become.

This is why stronger national action, as well as an ambitious international agreement with all major economies on board, is so necessary and so urgent. And, to be effective, action to combat climate change needs to become global.

What have we, in the European Union, been doing?

When the Kyoto Protocol was agreed in 1997, the EU-15¹ committed to reduce their collective emissions of a basket of six greenhouse gases in the Protocol's first period (2008-2012) to 8% below the level in their various base years (1990 in most cases). Based on figures for 2012 by the European Environment Agency, the EU-15 emissions averaged 11.8% below base-year levels during the 2008-2012 period².

Prior to the 2009 COP 15 meeting in Copenhagen, the EU has made a unilateral commitment to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions from its 28 Member States by 20% compared to 1990 levels and our position at this COP was that we were willing to move to 30% if others would also be ready to move on ambitious deals.

In the EU, I am pleased to inform you that the EU is now on course to reduce our emissions by 25% by 2020, beating our 20% target, and the EU is today the most CO₂-efficient major economy in the world, with lower levels of CO₂ per GDP than any other country.

While we are making good progress towards meeting our climate and energy targets for 2020, we continue to pursue more ambitious targets, aiming to drive continued progress towards a low-carbon economy. Our next targets for 2030 and 2050 are to reduce EU domestic greenhouse gas emissions by 40% and 80% respectively (as compared to the 1990 level). We are looking at cost-efficient ways to make our economy more climate-friendly and less energy-consuming. Clean technologies are the future for Europe's economy.

As part of the global agreement, we have also committed to reduce our emissions by 20% under the Kyoto Protocol's second period, which runs from 2013 to 2020.

At the initiative of the EU and the developing countries most vulnerable to climate change, agreement was reached at the Durban climate change conference in December 2011 to launch UN negotiations on a new global climate regime covering all countries. The current negotiation process, as mandated by the Durban Plan of Action, aims at a new global climate agreement by the year 2015, which will take effect in 2020. In our view, this 2015 Agreement needs to meet the challenging goal of reducing global emissions to below 1990 levels by 2030, which would be equivalent to a global reduction of around **25 % compared to 2010 emissions**. We need to have both developed countries to commit themselves to comparable emission reductions and developing countries to contribute adequately according to their responsibilities and respective capabilities. On this, I should like to express our sincere appreciation that Thailand has taken some steps in preparation for the eventual voluntary pledging.

¹ There were 15 countries which were EU Member States when the Kyoto Protocol was agreed in 1997.

² http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/g-gas/index_en.htm

Ladies and gentlemen,

Innovative policy, finance, technology, and leadership are fundamental to achieving a climate neutral future. We may not all agree on the best instruments to stop climate change, questioning whether market mechanisms should play a role, or we may use very diverse means of action and expression. However, we need to work together, remind the world of the scale of the issue we are facing and our responsibility.

We now count on your support to help us bringing all stakeholders on board. It is in our common interest to push for immediate and more ambitious global climate action, for the benefit of our children, our environment, and our societies.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Khob-Khun-Kha