

Speech by Ms. Heli Järvinen, Chair of the Finnish delegation at the 144th IPU Assembly in Nusa Dua on the general debate theme:

Getting to zero: Mobilizing parliaments to act on climate change

Ladies and gentlemen, Dear colleagues,

Icebergs are melting, sea levels are rising, island states are being submerged, floods are threatening big cities, species are becoming extinct and large areas are becoming uninhabitable. Climate change is causing expanding misery and wars, forcing masses of people to flee uninhabitable areas. There are already more than 70 million homeless people in the world. The UN predicts that this number will more than triple.

Climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the over-consumption of natural resources are the most serious problems facing humanity.

Finland's goal is the most ambitious in the world: we want to be carbon neutral in 2035.

We are a small nation of 5,5 million people.

Protecting our climate, stopping or slowing down climate change is not just something we do in good times and in rich countries and we cannot break free from this goal when other problems arise. We need to act quickly. Determinedly. Globally. And above all, together.

When future generations ask what you did to stop climate change and how you helped keep life going, I would respond to them:

we started the fight to stop, slow down, and adapt to climate change. We set the goal of reducing and getting rid of fossil fuels,

abandoned the energy use of peat,

promoted climate-friendly housing, mobility, industry, and agriculture,

and made the carbon-neutral goal a climate law to ensure continued work and progress during future governments.

-Already, the Finnish government has made the largest climate investment in our history by directing half of the European Recovery and Resilience Facility's resources

to combating the climate crisis. This means 1 billion euros for projects to combat climate change.

-We have supported the exit of households from oil heating with EUR 100 million and thus managed to halve the number of oil-heated homes.

-For the strategic program of the circular economy, Finland has, for the first time, set the goal of reducing the over-consumption of natural resources, which is the root cause of the climate crisis and the loss of biodiversity. The goal is that in 2035 the total consumption of domestic primary raw materials will not exceed the 2015 level.

To achieve this, we will support companies and accelerate the circular economy by increasing research, innovation, development, and investment in the circular economy. With Russia's completely unacceptable attack on Ukraine, the rapid green transition has also become a security issue for us.

During the current government Finland has also spent more money on nature conservation than ever before.

History has shown that lasting solutions to the climate and nature crisis must be found through cooperation, not conflict. Setting a carbon-neutral target for 2035 has been a turning point in the participation of society as a whole in climate work: business has become an advocate of clean solutions. Now, for many companies, climate action has created new business opportunities and the economy is pushing the government to act faster and more decisively.

Not all businesses, employees and residents will benefit from green transition in its first phase, and therefore fairness of transition is important. In this sense we have to be better, more fair and more proactive.

We are using the European Just Transition Fund to reduce the socio-economic costs of climate change and to support economic diversification and transition. The Just Transition Fund supports investment in areas such as digital connectivity, clean energy technologies, reducing emissions, revitalizing industry, and retraining workers.

We have no options. Not only is climate change affecting the nature, causing extreme weather events, natural disasters and food and water shortages, but it is also accelerating famine, wars, and refugee waves.

Finland has done and is doing a lot, but we still need more actions. We are also a small country of 5.5 million people, whose actions alone are not enough. That is why I call on all of you, every country and every parliament to fight climate change, because together we can make a difference.

I have a good understanding of the different circumstances, living standards and starting points in various countries, but I would like to remind you that poor countries have the most at stake. With the right attitude: with courage and open-mindedness, but also with a transparent society, broad tax collection and fair democracy, developing countries can also make great strides towards a green transition and, on the other hand, avoid the many mistakes of developed countries as early adopters. We need everyone and all of us for the climate work. Let's take care together that our children can be proud of their parents.