

**OPENING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SUMMIT ORGANIZED
JOINTLY BY THE INTER PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU) AND THE
CONGRESS OF DEPUTIES ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (COP25)**

Parliamentary Conference on Climate Change

Tuesday, December 10, 11:00 – 11:30

Congress of Deputies, Madrid

Draft speech by the Speaker of the Congress of Deputies (10')

Good morning,

Rt. Hon. President of the Inter Parliamentary Union,

Rt. Hon. Executive Secretary of the United Nations for Climate Change (tbc),

Dear Presidents,

Dear colleagues,

It is an honour for me to open this Parliamentary Summit, organized in cooperation with the Inter Parliamentary Union on occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP25), which we have had the great satisfaction and pride to host this year in the city of Madrid.

Spain hosts the COP 25 pursuant to the triple commitment undertaken by our country: a historical and continuously renewed commitment of friendship with Chile, a determined commitment with multilateralism, and a deeply rooted political commitment with action concerning climate change and its necessary global involvement.

The climate change conferences contributed first to raising awareness among citizens and institutions on the challenge we are facing; they subsequently specified its terms and demands and finally defined a shared and realistic action programme. Now is the time to set it in motion and guarantee its enforcement, as we now have all necessary instruments.

The COP held in Madrid is thus devoted to the implementation of the measures agreed in prior summits. It is a responsibility that falls within the scope of each of the States that make up the Conference and of the European Union in Europe. However, the difficulties faced when performing this task and the global effects of the decisions taken by each State require that coordinated action within the framework of the United Nations be kept and enhanced. This is a global challenge that absolutely requires solidarity among nations, since we are all responsible for taking actions and we all suffer the consequences of such actions.

Spain, its Government and its Parliament, is a firm advocate of the need for the multilateral coordination of actions against climate change. Multilateralism does not only contribute to increasing the efficiency of our efforts, but it is also a must for the very existence of such efforts and for them to be fruitful in time.

Coming years shall mark a key moment in time. Transition towards a sustainable future, with zero net emissions, offers us an opportunity to reconnect with the needs of real economy. Boosting the decarbonization of our economies shall in turn create new quality jobs and allow us to undertake infrastructure projects that will result in an unprecedented transformation.

We must make progress towards a climate neutrality scenario in 2050, thus going beyond the goals of 2030, with a new development model, always bearing in mind the social impact that these measures might have, so that we can maximize opportunities for everyone “leaving no one behind”.

Therefore, we might say that this is the great international cooperation of our times, since it takes everyone in and tries to protect the planet as a legacy for future generations. Moreover, it does so from a comprehensive approach, since pollution knows no borders and the fight against climate change demands everyone's shared effort at a global level: Governments, Parliaments, public institutions, civil society and particularly multilateral cooperation fora, such as the United Nations, the European Union or the Inter Parliamentary Union.

The recently published report of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) indicates that the level of concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere has reached 307,8 parts per million in 2018, namely the highest level during the last 3 million years. Likewise, the Annual Emissions Gap Report 2019, published by the United Nations Environmental Programme states that, even if all current national commitments are met, temperatures shall rise up to 3,2 Celsius degrees at the end of this century, well above the limit of 1,5-2 degrees set by scientists, which would trigger extreme climate events.

In short, climate science insists that we are entering a situation of *climate emergency* and that there is still a great gap between the commitments undertaken by countries according to the *Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)* and the goals to reduce emissions demanded by the Paris Agreement.

The Spanish Parliament adopted last legislative term a resolution endorsing the declaration of climate emergency in our country. The European Parliament has likewise just adopted a resolution declaring an “*environmental and climate emergency*” in Europe and at global level.

During the last couple of years, faced with scientific evidences of the acceleration of climate change and the possibility that humankind might shortly enter a point of no return, we have seen the widespread adoption of the terms climate crisis and climate emergency, together with the more traditional notion of climate change, used from 2000 onwards, since it was first adopted with the enactment of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992.

Against this background, we hope that two public figures of such relevance in the global discussion on climate change as professors Hans-Otto Pörtner and Jeffrey Sachs, shall contribute to clarifying the importance of this commitment aimed at action by the international community.

From their career and expertise they can contribute with numerous positive worldwide examples, thus showing how this responsible response to climate change, far from entailing a net cost for our societies, shall offer an unique opportunity to modernize and boost economic development and to do so under sustainable and socially equitable criteria.

2020 marks the beginning to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and Madrid's COP25, under the Presidency of Chile, is to represent a firm step in the right direction.

National Parliaments are to play a key role in this endeavor, since we are the ones who must define actions and obligations in each State to meet the commitments undertaken within the framework of the Conference. I am sure that this forum shall be most useful to compare the actions and difficulties found in this task and share useful practices as regards parliamentary duties.

The presence of national Parliaments in the COP no doubt contributes to its conclusions and agreements. But, above all, it must contribute to turn them into a reality in each one of our countries. For us, the COP25 does not finish these days, but it marks the beginning of our work for its results to become an effective reality.

Discussions to take place today in this meeting room, shall no doubt contribute to this end and most certainly result in subsequent contacts and relations that will enhance the joint dynamics of our parliaments and the actions to be taken by each one of them.

But let me underline another responsibility, another duty that falls not only on each national Parliament, but indeed on each

one of its members, each one of us. Action against climate change requires politics: politics to boots decisions and proposals by governments; politics to involve the greatest number of players and wills; politics to raise awareness on the need to take action; politics, in short, to mainstream to all fields the reality of the demands and commitments of the climate challenge.

Mainstreaming is indeed one of the key aspects of the COP and of the efficiency of the committed actions. The fight against climate change cannot be limited to the specific legislation in environmental matters: it demands tax, budgetary, energy and mobility commitments in each of the realms of our societies. This extension is still pending to a great extent.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in our hands, as representatives of the citizens, we have the tools to perform the political duty that falls on us: in our capacity to take public actions, in our individual legislative initiatives, in our power to act within our political parties.

The streets of Madrid witness these days the presence and demonstrations of many citizens from all over the world, to make policies to this end. This is a free and personal commitment that they certainly can be proud of and that inspires us. The COP25 has recognised this commitment and its importance and has opened itself to non-governmental players.

But in our case, as democratic representatives, political action is also an obligation. We have different positions as to its fulfilment, and we must consider interests and gather wills, reach agreements and define resources and commitments of all citizens. But this makes our responsibility even greater and the consequences of our actions, although maybe less visible, are more intense.

Our political activity shall seldom be so necessary and relevant as in this matter. Seldom shall urgency be so compelling. But need and urgency are values that we must be able to exploit in our political work. They frequently justify exceptional actions and procedures, boost consensus and stable agreements, provide legitimacy and citizens' commitment. Turning need and urgency into efficient and shared actions is our challenge as politicians and we need to be up to the challenge.

As Speaker of this Chamber, let me offer our greatest willingness and thank you all for your presence and commitment, and, above all, for your actions in your respective parliaments.

We would like to thank the IPU again for its cooperation and for making this meeting possible.

Thank you very much.