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STATEMENT

at the Summit on Climate Change

by

Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt

of Sweden

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

For me politics begins in the individual and the challenges she is facing. They vary from person to person. They depend on where we live. In which time we live.

Sometimes the challenges coincide and become common. Not only for the people living in Sweden. Not only for the citizens of Europe. But for all people. In all nations.

This is one of those moments. This is our opportunity: To help shape the world and change not only our own children's lives, but their children's – and generations to come.

Climate change is affecting the conditions of life for all of us, in one way or another. Some people notice that the snowy winters of childhood have disappeared. For others, in coastal zones and on small islands, climate change is a question of survival as sea levels continue to rise.

But for many yet it is not on top of the agenda. Poverty is quite enough a challenge to handle.

I'm not saying this to diminish the need for action. I'm saying it because even if this crisis indeed affects us all, some are not yet experiencing the gravity of the situation. Others have more immediate threats – such as hunger – to fight.

But one thing is sure.

For every day that goes by without us taking action, the consequences will be more severe: For all of us.

Two years ago, on the eve of the High-level Event on Climate Change here in New York, I informed the Secretary-General of my Government's intention to establish an international commission on Climate Change and Development.

The members of the Commission were asked to answer this question:

How should adaptation action be designed and supported? What is needed to build the resilience of the most vulnerable?

In May, the commission presented its recommendations here at the United Nations. Indicating a path that represents a new vision of sustainable development.

The commission proposes a High Level Task Force. To help us formulate a new vision for development – with regard to public policy and global governance. I welcome this.

It is a fact that also the developing countries need to take action. Social and economic systems in these countries are often more vulnerable. Developing countries need to adapt to the climate change they are already experiencing. And we need to help them.

I will tell you the European Union took an important step last week in identifying the need for a fast start of international public financing. To be used for capacity building and technical assistance.

The EU also estimates that some five to seven billion euro of assistance a year is likely to be needed in the coming two years – an estimate that needs to be adjusted over time.

You know, while we are sitting in international conference rooms and halls like this one, discussing how to adapt and how to finance adaptation, the climate keeps on changing. Mountain glaciers are melting. Sea levels are rising. Soils are getting drier.

This is the reason we are meeting here today. This is the reason we are meeting in Copenhagen.

It's about the climate. Our climate.

I said earlier that for me politics begins in the challenges of every individual.

And right now, individuals around the globe – in this country, in my country of Sweden, in small island nations and in developing countries – are challenged by climate change.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the meeting of the leaders of G8 and Major Economies Forum in Italy this summer there was agreement on the two degree target, set by the UN.

This was an important step.

But all countries must now step up and realise what is needed to keep to that limit: That global greenhouse gas emissions must peak by no later than 2020 and be reduced by at least fifty per cent by 2050. And that they must continue to decline thereafter.

So, developed countries need to reduce their emissions by twenty-five to forty per cent by 2020, compared to 1990. Developing countries by fifteen to thirty per cent, compared to business-as-usual.

In order for this to happen, we need to see increased commitment. Concrete mid-term targets by developed as well as developing countries.

The EU has pledged to make a thirty per cent reduction by 2020 as a part of a global agreement. That is more than anyone else has put on the table so far.

The international climate negotiations are at a critical juncture. I recognise that an ambitious climate policy has significant costs. That it will result in some sacrifices. But the cost of inaction will be far worse. And for some, it will be catastrophic.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are only 76 days from The Copenhagen meeting – but the negotiations are going far too slow and they are still lacking real progress. We are close to a deadlock.

As leaders we have a job to do.

Our job is to break the deadlock. Climb up from the trenches. Give clear political guidance to the negotiation process. Now is the time to rise to the challenge.

Now is one of those moments when our responsibilities must be extended: Beyond election cycles. Above the everyday planning and budgeting.

Because frankly, there is no other option than a successful outcome in Copenhagen. Action is long overdue.

Like never before, the welfare of our children and their children have become our concrete responsibility. Let us rise to that challenge.

Thank you.