



Honorable Co-chairs,

Dear colleagues,

Distinguished guests of ASEP10,

I am delighted to have the honor to speak in front of you today about one crucial problem of our planet that is climate change, having an audience which is and will be very relevant to this topic. We have the power, the tools and we must have the will to address it. The ASEP platform is a great place to put our efforts together and tackle this phenomenon.

Climate change is an urgent global challenge with long-term implications for the sustainable development and security of all countries; it threatens to undermine global stability and security because of its human consequences, including widespread hunger, water shortages, forced migration, conflict over scarce resources and disease; those facing the most extreme risks are the poorest, with the fewest resources and the least capacity to cope, despite contributing the least to the crisis.

Our planet is changing. We have world record heat waves worldwide and three years in a row of record high temperatures. Satellite data from June 2017 showed that since 1998 the globe is warming TWICE as fast as scientists have predicted it would. We have warmer and more acid oceans, we have shrinking ice sheets, we have glacial retreats, we have sea level rise, we have extreme weather events.

Adaptation becomes a key element and a constant companion to mitigation in our approach to climate change. While mitigation is tackled in compliance with global reduction targets, adaptation requires a local response to the consequences of the impact of climate change on the natural and human systems. But adaptation is not enough, we need to do more.

In the context of the 10th Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change meeting preparing the COP 24 in Poland and the preparation of Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, climate change is a global challenge that requires a responsible approach and concrete action on international, national, regional and local level.

It's our duty as politicians to lead the fight against climate change and to put in place measures that help citizens that are most affected. The time for questioning the reality of climate change is far over, now it is the time to take action. Politicians who still make decisions ignoring climate change are politicians of the past. The environment and the future of the planet are not to be ignored from any decisions we make regarding our countries .

ASEP represents an ideal CONTEXT to discuss the topic of climate change and to reaffirm our commitments.

Our decisions about the changes we will implement are RELEVANT to our planet, as ASEM partner countries count for 60% of the world population. We have the POWER and the RESOURCES to produce these decisions, as we, ASEM partner countries, represent almost two thirds of the global economy and we are frontrunners in terms of research and technology. And we have the WILL to do it, as it is shown by the declaration we will sign tomorrow.

And, most important, the time is NOW. Today we witness technologies which only a few years ago were part of science fiction stories. We are now able to fly around the Earth only by using solar power. We are now able to raise vegetables without soil or by using only a few drops of water. We are now able to extract carbon from the air and turn it into carbon nanofibres. What used to be Science-fiction is now pure Science. This allows us to be bold in setting ambitious targets for addressing the global climate change challenge.

Romania reaffirmed its commitment to do its part by ratifying the Paris Agreement. Also, Romania supports the French initiative regarding the Global Pact for the Environment and is among the co-sponsors of the recently adopted resolution by the United Nations General Assembly in this regard.

Next year, Romania will host, during its Presidency of the EU Council, in April 2019, an international conference on «Building resilience to natural disasters» – a platform to exchange views on how to assess and address more effectively climate-related security risks and to enhance the base for a resilient future.

Moreover, a successful outcome of COP 24 (December 2018, Katowice) is essential in order to operationalize the Paris Agreement.

After the COP 24, we will meet in Bonn at the intermediate session of negotiations on climate change in June 2019 that will take place under the Romanian presidency of the EU Council. Romania's principal objective is to take over the folder on international aspects regarding climate change from Austria, which currently holds the EU Councils' Presidency, and continue the international talks and to ensure a good implementation of the Paris Agreement.

All of these give a strong message that we are completely committed to ensuring a clean, healthy and sustainable environment to our citizens, to our planet and to the generations to come. It is not about a better future, it is about having a future on Earth. We should all make a firm commitment. As I've said before, we have the relevance, the power, the resources and the will to do it.