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Secretary General John Podesta
Day 3 Remarks: Summit on Managing Long-Term Climate Change
Washington, D.C., October, 2015

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

I want to thank you for your hard work, diligence, and good faith in representing your countries' positions.

Also, thank you for your patience over the course of these three days. The truth is, however, that patience is perhaps not what the world needs right now, as the moment of opportunity for finding a way to deal with climate change winds down.

This is a time of urgency, and I believe that was reflected in the energy and intensity of our proceedings here. Again I commend you for your hard work.

You have in your hands now a Draft Framework Agreement on Managing Long-Term Climate Change. It is a rough draft, to be sure; it needs more refining by the parties here today and in our Secretariat to be fit for signature, but it is still an important document.

You agreed to 9 guiding principles; six migration proposals, including a basic recognition of climate refugees; 6 ideas for how to deal with resource scarcity, including agricultural development that could mean crucial resilience for nations around the world. You offered 7 proposals for how to deal with disaster relief, which were general, but an important consensus.

And finally, you offered ideas about how to reduce emissions.

First, all agreed on the need for an aggressive near term global target of 30 percent CO2 reduction relative to 2005 – within the next 10 years.

Second, all parties agreed that binding measurable targets are needed. Moreover, the EU, India and the United States agreed to commit to at least meeting the 30 percent reduction in CO2 by

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2025, and to going further if possible. Meeting this goal will be incredibly challenging and will require unprecedented sharing of technology.

I had hoped that China would also agree to specific targets for 2025 at this conference. That did not happen. However, late yesterday, China agreed to conduct a detailed assessment of its energy sector in the next several months, working closely with the EU and United States regarding technology transfer and other assistance in order to define a specific CO2 reduction target for 2025. I urge all of the parties to move forward expeditiously.

The new 2025 targets provide a very important and challenging goal that, if achieved, will represent a fundamental breakthrough in mitigating climate change. I implore all of the parties to follow through on this pledge with utmost urgency. The future of the planet depends on it.

What we asked you to do, what we asked each other to do these past few days was not easy.

The world faces an unprecedented challenge – we have an obligation to continue to lift people out of poverty all over the world;

And to sustain the standard of living of others.

That requires strong and growing economies, and for more than 150 years, that has meant burning coal, oil, or natural gas.

Shutting down that dirty engine that has powered global growth – but that now fundamentally threatens it – will be very, very hard.

These past few days, we were to focus on how to manage the consequences of global climate change between 2015 and 2050;

And how to prevent more dramatic climate change after 2050.

We did focus more on the latter than on the former, even though all of you are to varying degrees preoccupied with climate crises already. Right now, in 2015, not in some projected future, you are all struggling to control your borders, keep your domestic populations calm, deal with the aftermath of disasters, and manage high food prices and water shortages.

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Now, we will certainly give each delegation a chance to comment on how this Framework Agreement helps us with our immediate need to adapt to a changing climate and also to the long-term emissions reductions needs;

And there are aspects of this agreement that certainly beg for clarification and discussion. I have questions, for example, as to whether you could deliver the support of your domestic populations for some of these proposals.

And that's fine – you will all have a chance to comment in a moment, if you have something to say about this draft.

But before we do that I want to ask you to consider 2 questions which have been on the table but I believe need further discussion. First, I urge you to discuss the creation of a large global fund, perhaps \$100 billion, for the joint development and diffusion of energy supply and end use science and technology, with contributions pegged to each country's share of global CO₂ before 2005.

We need to do all we can to reduce emissions today, right now, but we also need to make it possible for us to hit far more ambitious targets. My sense is that we are going to find it very difficult to achieve meaningful targets or even meaningful discussions about targets until we have the means of meeting them while sustaining economic growth.

Second, I hope that you will discuss what specific resources – money, military, or other – your teams are willing to commit for disaster relief. This is an urgent problem: we are seeing a sharp increase in catastrophes, and stagnation in our capacity to respond. Between now and 2050, this is going to cause tremendous human suffering – it already has – and we are simply not doing enough to arm ourselves to meet the threat.

Before we discuss your reactions to the draft agreement and the questions I have put on the table, I want to remind you one last time about that angry red future. *[shows slide with 2100 temperature projections]* This is a future with no hope. The agreement we reached is a good step in the right direction, but it's not yet enough to commit us to a path to a different future.

Ladies and gentlemen, the clock has been ticking, and our time for action is almost up.

Would any of the delegates care to comment?