



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Forty-fourth session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Implementation and
the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice
Bonn, 26 May 2016**

**Farewell address by
Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary**

SBI Chair Mr. Tomasz Chruszczow,
SBSTA Chair Mr. Carlos Fuller,
APA Co-Chairs Ms. Jo Tyndall and Ms. Sarah Baashan,
Distinguished delegates,
Dear friends,

When I first spoke to this distinguished group as the new Executive Secretary in 2010, six months after COP15 in Copenhagen, I invited all governments to courageously rise to the scale and urgency of what had to be done, to set the sails higher than where they were.

Since then, over the past six years, with increasing support from non-Party actors and civil society from around the world, you have constantly trimmed the sails, grasping the politically possible at every point along the way, until in Paris last December you were able to fully capture the winds of change and put the world on a clear course toward sustainable, environmentally sound social and economic growth.

This is a course towards increased resilience and lower emissions. But it is also a course towards a better future for all, a safer future where growth is powered by clean energy; where growth is inclusive, fair and equitable; and where growth is sustained in all countries over generations.

As you well know much work remains to be done to breathe life into the vision of Paris. But today at my last engagement with you as Executive Secretary, I am filled with gratitude.

As the progress in our collective efforts is first and foremost the responsibility of national governments, my first thanks go to you, the Parties to the Climate Change Convention. To you here today, and through you to all delegates who are not here but who laboured so hard for so long, my thanks for your national aspirations, your cooperation with each other and above all, your collective ambition. You have made history.

Among the Parties, special thanks to the seven COP presidencies I have been privileged to support: Mexico (*muchas gracias*), South Africa (*Baie dankie*), Qatar (*Shukran*), Poland (*dziękuję*), Peru (*mil gracias*), France (*trois mille fois merci*) and

the incoming Morocco (*bil tawfiq Inshallah*). And most certainly to Germany, our very gracious host country (*ganz herlichen Dank*).

Beyond national governments this has been a journey of many hands, hearts and minds from all corners of the Earth, from all sectors of society and from all races and creeds.

This journey has been supported by visionary sub-national governments, committed corporations, discerning financial institutions, and a concerned yet hopeful civil society, orchestrating a symphony of voices representing every woman, man, youth and child. My gratitude to all of them, as they have ensured that this process of transformation is now propelled by the unstoppable drive of our shared humanity, boosted by new recognitions of opportunity and possibility.

My thanks also to the extended UN system that has supported us all along the way and reminded us of the ultimate goals we collectively pursue – the protection of human rights and the most vulnerable, the eradication of poverty, the social and environmental building blocks of peace, and the long term sustainability of growth.

And most intensely, I extend my deeply felt gratitude to the amazing staff of the climate change secretariat. When I joined the secretariat I felt that I had finally arrived home. Together we have further matured this institution into the high performing organization it is now.

I thank each and every member of the UNFCCC staff for your unwavering commitment, your tireless dedication and your collective wisdom. I shall be forever indebted to you. And I am honoured to hand over the baton to the very capable Patricia Espinosa to guide the next phase of this journey.

Many people ask whether I am sad to be leaving—the answer is no. I have had the unparalleled privilege of being at your side as you collectively wrote history.

Yes sharing a few—or many— tears of passion along the way, and also relishing many moments of utter joy. But it is in this crucible of emotions and convictions that the indelible path was forged.

You have often heard me say that impossible is not a fact, it is an attitude. You have proven that to be true.

On the global stage of human endeavours there are many challenges that today seem as intractable as addressing climate change did just a few years ago. As I depart from these halls and head for the next, I take inspiration from your efforts and your accomplishments.

I know that it is precisely at the points of greatest human need, that we can and must all rise to our highest sense of purpose. I have no doubt that together we will.

Thank you.
