



**California State Senate
Sacramento, 18 June 2015**

**Address by
Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Distinguished Members of the Senate,

Thank you very much for having me here. Usually one starts by saying "it's a little bit difficult to follow so and so". Today I have to follow someone who's not even here. I have to follow the Pope. How difficult is that?

The Pope certainly has set the bar for all of us by truly making a clarion call to all of us by setting the moral responsibility to every single decision-maker, no matter what level of government, no matter what level of corporate decision making. He has called us all to order and I think we all stand up to that call.

Dear Senators, I am very appreciative of this opportunity today. I know that you are accustomed to thinking that California is completely unique. I would agree. What is possible in California is not possible anywhere.

Without denying that reality I also want to put it to you that California, from my perspective because I work at the global level, is actually a microcosm. Now for a state that is as large as California, you are probably not used to thinking of California as being a micro-anything, but let me tell you that you are a microcosm of the world.

Certainly, you are a microcosm from the perspective of climate change, because you have here realities that are very in tune and very in line with the realities of the larger world. You have an economic base that is as diverse as going from the highest high tech companies all the way to the ancient art of agriculture. You have many different cultures here, perhaps not quite as many as the United Nations, but getting there, and you have a huge economic income disparity, that is something that is of concern to all of us.

All of these issues are issues that the world grapples with, just like you grapple with. In that context, the fact that way back in 2006 – and thank you very much again for that amazing leadership – you have been able within this beautiful building to pass legislation that was truly landmark climate change legislation.

Since then, you have been able to implement and prove what the entire world wants to achieve now in Paris. That is to prove that it is possible to continue growing your economy, to continue increasing your GDP, while bringing down your greenhouse gas emissions – to delink those two curves that traditionally and historically have been one and the same. That de-linking is absolutely at the heart of what 195 countries are still grappling with. How are we going to do what you have done?

Not only have you been able to do that, my friends, but you're doing it with the Pope's call in mind, which means intentionally making sure that the benefits go to the underprivileged, to those who are most vulnerable to climate change in California. It is the same challenge in the world at large. You are proving that is possible. The world wants to do that. The world is committed – 195 countries – but they don't know how. California has figured out how.

So I am here to tell you the world is looking at you, whether you know that or not, the world is looking at California, the world wants to know how did you do that? How are you going to continue to expand the ambition of California? And that's why I'm here.

If California weren't squarely being observed by the world for lessons learned, I would have no business being here because I don't usually have the honour of working with state level governments. But the fact that California has been such a visionary – such a cutting edge government – truly I have to tell you it is really an inspiration. And there are 195 countries that will go to Paris knowing that that is the intent. We have to de-link but we cannot leave the most vulnerable populations of the world behind.

California has an amazing story to tell, so, please tell it. I am also telling the story of California, but nobody can tell it better than you. Those who know me know that I never stand and never speak in public without challenging everybody. So, in addition to the accolades to what you have already done, here is my challenge to you.

From my perspective, you have two tasks ahead of you. Number one: increase the time-frame and your ambition. Yes, you have 2020 targets – fantastic. Jerry Brown has

already put 2030 targets, 2050 targets – can that actually be moved forward? Can you increase the ambition of what you're doing into other sectors? Because, frankly, we need to do that – increase ambition and increase the time frame.

The second task is to increase the geographic boundary of your influence, of your leadership. Call it exporting leadership. California needs to export leadership. I thank California for your amazing leadership with the Under 2 MOU. Currently 14 regions have signed on in states around the world, including developing countries, as diverse as California to Cross River State, Nigeria.

That is true leadership: to be able to bring economies that are very, very different under the same concept and be able to share with them lessons learned and measures that have actually worked in California.

Expand ambition, expand the timeframe, expand your leadership. And if you all manage to do that, I can just retire to a beautiful beach in California.
