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**GLOBE International 2nd GLOBE Climate Legislation Summit
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**Address by
Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I sincerely thank Senator Markey and GLOBE International for inviting me to help launch the 4th GLOBE Climate Legislation Study and the Partnership for Climate Legislation. I am delighted to join you again.

As I have said from the beginning of my collaboration with you, nothing can be agreed internationally until enough is agreed at the national level. So I thank you for the very important work you have done over the past few years supporting the development of climate legislation in so many key countries.

Some of you may not know that two years ago I vicariously challenged GLOBE to double their coverage of countries and they did, and then last year I again challenged GLOBE and the Grantham Research Institute to double the number of countries covered by this report, and again they have!

Here we are, the 4th edition study showing climate policy progress in 66 countries, 62 with flagship legislation, eight of those coming last year. The responsiveness and success of GLOBE in meeting this challenge is an irresistible temptation to challenge GLOBE and GLOBE members further.

We could of course aspire to a next report that covers all countries of the world, and I would not put it past GLOBE to move in that direction. However, today I ask all of you for your help on an even more critical and certainly more urgent challenge, the challenge of overcoming partisanship when addressing climate change.

I am sure this comes as a strange request to all of you who by definition and by affiliation represent a political party. And I am actually surprised you have not all left the room in a stampede, but bear with me for a few minutes and a few thoughts.

Some of you have already achieved climate change legislation. I am certain that was no easy task. I am certain your achievement was the result of much debate within your own political party, but more importantly, with colleagues from other political parties.

Debate is healthy for any society, for any country. It can and should lead to robust solutions that reflect a broader array of interests and concerns and thus benefit a wider spectrum of the population.

Debate about climate change is also healthy. Climate change is one of the most complex challenges we have ever dealt with and it affects directly or indirectly almost every human endeavour.

Hence solutions to climate change should reflect an in-depth, careful consideration of the vast array of factors and implications. This debate is constructive and advisable. However, it is neither constructive nor advisable to let climate change devolve into a politicized altercation.

So, political, yes; politicized, no. A healthy political debate arrives at practical policy that is good for all, people and private sector, economy and environment. Politicizing the issue takes us out of this pursuit of the good, creates ideological divides and muddies the discourse to the point where constructive action and compromise seem impossible.

To be honest, the arguments I hear on both sides of this altercation don't seem to make much sense to me. On the one hand I hear that solving climate change is about restricting growth, losing jobs or increasing government control. On the other hand I hear solving climate change is about a utopian energy infrastructure, the primacy of global interests above national interest or extreme no growth policy for environmental reasons.

Frankly, we are already on borrowed time and can no longer afford the luxury of remaining mired in ideological extremes. Climate change can no longer be a paralyzed partisan debate. The stakes are too high.

Knowing what we know now, neither a continuation of business-as-usual nor a perfect, immediate and ultimate solution to climate change is realistic or possible. Today, I propose that in the search for climate solutions and the pursuit of legislation that supports these solutions, we do not let perfect be the enemy of good.

I propose that legislators come together to accomplish no-regrets goals that resonate across the political spectrum. I call policy that moves us toward that aim part of a "Golden No-Regrets Triangle," built by jobs, public health and security. Almost as unquestionable as home-baked bread, vanilla ice cream and warm apple pie.

The fact is no politician would regret supporting the three areas in the Golden No-Regrets Triangle, because they improve people's lives, they strengthen businesses' bottom lines and they secure the future for our children and grandchildren.

On jobs, let me cut to the chase. There is simply no doubt that there are more jobs to be created by the development and deployment of new technologies than there are in the technologies of old.

Right here in the US, the state of Massachusetts is a great example of green incentives applied to financial and intellectual capital with the 2008 Green Jobs Act.

The 2013 report on the effects of this law show clear results. More than 5,500 clean energy firms in the state. Almost 80,000 clean energy sector jobs. This legislation invests in local jobs, clean energy job training and renewable energy projects.

It is not just in Massachusetts. If you look across the US, renewables are driving a transformation of the energy system. Renewable energy generated 13% of US electricity in 2013, up from 8% in 2007, and low costs incentivize more installation.

Consider that renewable energy patents in the US increased from fewer than 200 a year from 1975 to 2000 to more than 1,000 annually by 2009, compared to 2009's 300 fossil fuel-related patents. It is a look at current innovation and the future of energy.

This trend is playing out worldwide as clean energy installation and greener supply chains are increasingly seen as a route towards competitiveness in Asia, Latin America and the EU. In China, one of the world's fastest growing economies, through 2020 solar is expected to add 16,300 jobs annually and wind will add another 34,000 jobs annually.

So the first point of the triangle is: Pursue clean energy to expand employment opportunities.

On security, we know that national security and energy security are a primary concern as they drive development and safeguard gains.

I spent yesterday talking to military leaders at the Pentagon. It is no surprise that the US, the world's largest military, is investing heavily in energy efficiency and renewables to cut costs and increase power security on bases and in field operations.

Military forces around the world are investing in exciting technology innovations in energy generation, storage and deployment that improve operational capacity, reduce costs and have far-reaching implications for the energy industry as a whole. Other security forces in the UK, Australia, NATO and Asia are moving, too.

On energy security, countries that import energy see clean energy as a way to reduce dependence and avoid risk exposure in energy markets. Look at small island States, as this is the UN year of the Small Island Developing States.

These developing states import fossil fuels at high percentages of GDP for electricity and consumer costs run hundreds of times higher than the US. Renewable energy frees up the GDP for other services and lowers the cost of doing business or running a household.

Corporations have similar concerns regarding overhead costs, market variability and energy security. Leaders like Google, Wal-Mart and IKEA take rising costs and potential instability into their hands with renewables and green investments.

The second point of the triangle emerges: A safer and more secure future comes from clean energy policy.

On public health, different countries face very different challenges, but all countries are united by the fact that the path to a healthy climate is a path to a healthy populace.

For some air quality is not just about public health, it can slow economic output. We see this in China, where smog has slowed growth, prompting a shift to clean energy to restore economic health.

And for others, water issues range from drought that is the forebear of water shortage and wildfires, to diminishing groundwater supply issues where the needs of people, agriculture and energy producers meet head on. We see this in the western US.

Extreme weather, heat waves, droughts and floods all represent public health risks.

The final point of the triangle: Policies that safeguard public health also ensure economic potential is uncompromised.

It is clear. Movement in the Triangle is good for social and economic development even without figuring climate into the equation. And when we do figure in climate, net positive gains increase:

- Clean energy and efficiency targets that produce green jobs also cut emissions;
- Security policy that uses clean energy to increase operational capacity also reduces greenhouse gases; and
- Investment that keeps people healthy keeps economies healthy.

But the important thing is that at every point on the Golden No-Regrets Triangle, there are legislative policy options that every politician can support for reasons that are central to the core of simple good governance, independently of the climate change aspects.

Dear friends, as I have said, climate can no longer be a partisan debate because we are running out of time. But overcoming partisanship will not happen by chance or overnight.

We must engage those who disagree with respect, understanding and a firm grasp of the facts about the issue. Sound science and emerging impacts that demonstrate a clear need for immediate action. Leaders from the left and the right have in the past championed ground-breaking environmental and energy legislation.

The underlying objectives that drive climate action show an incredible amount of space for agreement and understanding. Energy independence, national security, spending reductions, new jobs and business certainty are powerful drivers of growth, and they happen to also be outcomes of climate action.

This message cuts through partisan divide with practical truth. Climate action is sound economic, security, health and development policy. For everyone.

Ladies and gentlemen, as legislators you are the centerpiece of national policy making.

During this critical year of 2014, nations have determined that they will assess the contributions they will make to a new universal climate agreement slated for 2015. This is the critical year in which every nation must decide whether these contributions will be based on national legislation or regulation, on the side of clean and efficient energy or smarter land use, or on both.

Each of you is well-positioned to join your national discourse as a voice of reason and respect, pointing your nation towards legislated policy and a regulatory framework that works on two levels.

On one level, it is the best policy for long-term job generation and economic growth, ensuring a secure and healthy future. On another level, the same policy allows your nation to lead in the multilateral process with strong contributions. We already have an ever increasing number of examples.

Morocco will reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels with a renewables target of 42% by 2020. The EU will ensure a competitive and secure energy costs with 40% emissions reduction and 27% renewable targets.

China will improve air quality and energy security with goals of 200 GW wind and 40GW solar, targets they keep revising up. Costa Rica has 100% carbon neutrality goal, making its industry and agriculture more competitive in the new economy.

None of these countries are doing this to “save the planet”. They are doing it because they see specific social and economic advantages from these policies. And, each of these countries strengthens their position in climate talks with concrete targets and demonstrated openness to policy solutions.

I urge you to reach out to colleagues across the political spectrum and help them see policy at home with co-benefits for growth and climate is also an international path to a better tomorrow for all. This is our new reality.

Here in this storied chamber, let me end with a reality check.

Despite all the inspiring action underway across countries with differing political complexions, greenhouse gas emissions are today at the highest concentration in 800,000 years. The atmosphere does not respond to right or left of center politics, to democracies or planned economies, it just responds to emissions.

Reality check: On current trajectories we are headed for a world perhaps four degrees Celsius higher than the pre-industrial era. Anyone who grasps the science of a permanent shift in global temperatures knows a four degree Celsius warmed world looks very different and very much more hazardous.

The other reality: We have all the technologies, policies, finance sources and innovative market mechanisms needed to ensure that this sobering reality is avoided and a positive one is realized.

What we need is the willingness to cooperate across political divides. What we need is the willingness to stand up to our individual and global responsibility to safeguard the future of mankind.

I want to be able to look my grandkids in their eyes and tell them I did, we did, everything we could to give them this future. I want you to be able to do the same thing. That is my challenge to GLOBE, and it has to be done this year!

Thank you.
