

Ambassador Roland Galharague's speech at the New Climate Economy conference
Institut français, Budapest, 25 February 2015
Check against delivery

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me welcome you to this conference on the New Climate Economy. Thank you, Lieselore Cyrus, Jonathan Knott, and Árpád Kovács, for this opportunity to work together on "climate economy." It's not often enough that those words are thought about together and I am glad this whole day of conference and round tables will be dedicated to discussing how, in Hungary, one can participate in the effort to build lasting economic growth while reducing the risks connected to climate change.

Today, 25 February 2015, we are in the run-up phase to one of the most important global decisions for the future of our planet. In fewer than 280 days, on 30 November, the COP21 – the United Nations' 21st Conference Climate Conference – will open in Paris. By 11 December, 196 negotiators, one from each the world's countries, must come to a deal on fighting climate change.

Failure to conclude such a deal would have cataclysmic consequences for our planet and for all life on it: rising temperatures (over 2°C and perhaps as much as 5°C over the coming century), recurrent and ever more serious extreme floods and droughts, rising food and water insecurity.

None of this is desirable, and that's why it is urgent to take action: decisive, ambitious action. The deal to be agreed in Paris must therefore also be that: decisive, and ambitious. It must take the shape of a universal agreement, in which all of the world's countries, regardless of their status in terms of wealth, must agree to curb their greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit to a maximum 2°C the increase in global average temperatures.

It must take the shape of a legally binding agreement, with the means to ensure that the promises each of the world's countries make at the negotiating table are actually followed through in the months and years to come.

It must be an agreement that is not imposed from the top but that comes with the support of as broad an array of civil society representatives as possible. Only by making the preparation for the Paris agreement a truly open and participative effort can we hope for the deal to be one for the future and not just for the present.

It must, finally, be an agreement that comes with the financial tools to bridge the gap between the world's more and less developed countries. With a projected endowment of USD 100 billion per year till 2020, the Green Climate Fund has already been set up to the effect of helping the most vulnerable countries adapt to climate change, mitigate its already occurring effects, and develop the technological tools necessary for adaptation and mitigation.

With just under 280 days to go, progress to date can be described as positive enough. In Geneva two weeks ago, negotiators agreed the draft text that will serve as the official basis for the negotiations at the Paris climate summit. This is a major step forward.

Still, much remains to be done. By the end of this semester, each country must make known its intended nationally determined contributions, i.e. the actions it intends to take under the global Paris agreement. More negotiations preparatory to the Paris conference must sharpen the Geneva draft text and determine whether these intended nationally determined contributions will amount to the effort necessary limit global average climate warming to maximum 2°C. Most importantly, all stakeholders must continue to be galvanized with the same message: that climate change must be tackled head-on and that the costs of inaction far outweigh the costs of action.

Today's conference is part of the general effort towards getting the brighter side of this message through:

Ambassador Roland Galharague's speech at the New Climate Economy conference
Institut français, Budapest, 25 February 2015
Check against delivery

Better growth means better climate. Climate action means economic growth.

The logic is simple. Its translation into everyday practice at the political and economic levels is perhaps less so. But it is the very purpose of this conference to show that thinking "climate" when acting "economy" can be done, and that the tools and arguments exist that Hungary can make its own, for the benefit of its own economic growth and for the welfare of its population.