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Speech by Federal Chancellor Dr Angela Merkel on the occasion of the World Leaders' Summit at the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP26) in Glasgow on 1 November 2021

Redner:

Angela Merkel

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Mr President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Colleagues,

In 1995, I had the honour to chair the first Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC as Environment Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany. Here in Glasgow today, COP26 will be the last such conference I attend.

This raises the question: Where are we now? We have formulated numerous decisions, most recently again yesterday at the meeting of the G20 in Rome. Our main yardstick is first and foremost the Paris Agreement of 2015. However, as we heard in the opening session, we are not where we need to be. The reduction goals, the NDCs, submitted by the States Parties do not add up to what we agreed in Paris.

The world is, of course, hoping – and I want to underscore this – that our position will have improved by the end of this conference in Glasgow. One aspect is to set more ambitious goals. But in the coming days the primary concern will be the technical issues. How can we measure our goal attainment more reliably and develop a standardised gauge?

We are well aware that the impact of climate change is devastating. We must – and I also say that we can – implement the Paris Agreement, not just in the course of this century but, as we stated as the G20, by the middle of this 21st century.

We are aware that the industrialised countries have a particular responsibility. That of course also applies to the Federal Republic of Germany. That is why we have once again made our climate goals more stringent. We want to reduce our emissions by 65 percent compared to 1990 levels by 2030, and to be climate-neutral by 2045.

The financing is essential if the industrialised countries are to maintain their credibility. Germany and Canada have examined the delivery plan once more. We have to concede that we will only achieve the financing goal, which amounts to 100 billion US dollars, in 2023 – late, but at least we can achieve it. That sends an important signal. We from the German side are making a considerable contribution and will increase this to six billion euro by 2025.

Attaining climate neutrality is one goal. The concrete measures are another. Alongside our national efforts, we are, of course, endeavouring to contribute in many areas. With the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use we are strengthening the protection of forests. For me, it is important that we put a stop to global deforestation by 2030. We have a successful partnership with Colombia, with whom we are driving forward forest protection together with Norway and the United Kingdom.

Germany will also be part of an initiative that I believe is especially interesting. With the Just Energy Transition Partnership with South Africa we are demonstrating how we can phase out the use of coal. I think that will serve as a pilot project for many African countries. The truth is, of course, very clear-cut. The fact that yesterday within the context of the G20 we agreed to stop international financing for coal-fired power plants – and with immediate effect – is very important.

Ladies and gentlemen, with government activities alone we will not make progress. For this requires radical transformation of how we live, work and conduct business. I therefore want to take this opportunity to make a very clear appeal for pricing for CO₂ emissions. With this form of pricing, which we already have in the European Union, which is to be introduced in China and which needs to be developed together with many others throughout the world, we could get our industries and businesses to find the technologically most effective and efficient ways to achieve climate neutrality. We need to work out how we can best integrate CO₂-free mobility, CO₂-free industry and CO₂-free processes into our lives.

My clear call in the Decade of Action, in the decade in which we now live, is for us to become more ambitious at a national level and at the same time to find global instruments that not only make use of taxpayers' money but are also economically viable. And for me, the answer is CO₂ pricing.

Thank you very much. -

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