

**SPEECH BY H.E. MR. NICOS ANASTASIADES, PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS, FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**“CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MIDDLE  
EAST: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS”**

**18 May 2018**

**Filoxenia Conference Centre, Nicosia**

**Your Excellency Former Prime Minister of France, Mr.  
Laurent Fabius,**

**Distinguished guests,**

**Dear President of The Cyprus Institute, Mr. Costas  
Papanicolas,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**It is with great pleasure that I address the international conference “Climate Change in the Mediterranean and the Middle East: Challenges and Solutions” which is organized by the Cyprus Institute.**

**The findings contained in the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are clear. Global warming is undisputable and human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.**

**We must rise to these challenges with the appropriate responsibility. Only by acting collectively, decisively and with great urgency can we avoid the worst consequences of a rapidly warming planet.**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Cyprus is a Mediterranean island state, located in an area that is already experiencing the serious effects of climate change. We have been witnessing prolonged periods of drought, increased temperatures, degradation of our forests and rare ecosystems.**

**Cyprus has become an Annex One to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and a Kyoto Protocol Party in 2013. In this context, we fully comply with the commitments and expectations of the International Community and the European Union and we actively participate in the joint efforts to protect the climate of our planet and secure the future of our people.**

**We have already ratified the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, which establishes the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol from 1 January 2013 until 31 December 2020. Furthermore, Cyprus ratified in 2016 the new international agreement for addressing the climate change challenge, the well-known “Paris Agreement”.**

**Dear friends,**

**The Paris Agreement was a historic milestone for enhancing global collective action and accelerating the global transformation to a low carbon and climate resilient society. Now, we have to start the implementation of the Agreement.**

**At EU level, under the Paris Agreement, Member States have collectively submitted their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions. This is a binding target of at least 40%**

**domestic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 levels and they are collectively providing the adequate means for mitigation and adaptation actions in developing countries. A particular focus is given on supporting the poorest, most vulnerable countries, and those with the least ability to mobilize other resources.**

**With respect to Cyprus, our national target for greenhouse gas emissions is a 24% reduction compared to 2005 levels. In order to achieve this new goal we are focusing on the development of cleaner fuels, such as natural gas, and the development of policies and measures to further save energy through the use of renewable energy sources.**

**An important challenge is the reduction of emissions in the transport sector, which accounts for about 25% of all emissions in Cyprus. At the same time, other policies are**

**focusing on agriculture, forestry, and waste management. Our new policies will simultaneously decrease our dependency on fossil fuel imports, enhance our competitiveness, and create new jobs while transitioning to a low carbon economy.**

**To address the impacts of climate change, in May 2017 the National Adaptation Strategy was adopted. This Strategy aims to strengthen Cyprus' capacity to adapt to observed and projected climate change and to effectively prevent and address the negative impacts of climate change in the most effective way.**

**The implementation of Adaptation actions is expected to positively contribute to sustainable green and blue growth, effective resource management, and improved production efficiency. We also expect to see benefits for our economy,**

**with new investments in innovative technologies and products resistant to climate change, as well as new employment opportunities in many sectors.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Cyprus, a country that is already experiencing the impacts of climate change, strongly supports international and regional scientific initiatives and cooperation in order to address this challenge. Within this framework, our country is coordinating a project proposal titled “Development of a climate change impacts and adaptation observatory”. The project Concept Note has been approved by the European Commission and we have recently submitted a Full Proposal to the LIFE 2017 call. The project work will be assisted by the CYCLADAPT Scientific Advisory Committee consisting of leading national, regional, and international experts on**

**climate change, including experts from the Cyprus Institute and other regional partners.**

**Moreover, within the state bilateral and multilateral cooperation that we have established, we have already included climate change issues as regional priorities and relevant agreements have been signed.**

**On this occasion, I would like to note that the role of education at all levels and all its forms is fundamental in the fight against climate change. The role of Tertiary Education, beyond research and innovation in the field of climate change, is crucial to the formation of professionals, scientists and citizens who, apart from being environmentally literate citizens, will be governed by a spirit of responsibility and sensitivity regarding the protection and preservation of ecological integrity, social justice, solidarity and cohesion. The impacts of climate change, apart from the**



**ecological, social, political, and economic levels, make this issue a matter of the highest priority. The Republic of Cyprus addresses this issue in the context of a holistic and systemic approach, based on the cooperation of all Ministries and agencies involved. On behalf of the President of the Republic, I would like to assure you that climate change governs all of our national policies. As Minister of Education and Culture, I would like to emphasize that climate change, through formal, non-formal and informal education, is infused in all sustainability goals, which are a priority of the Cyprus Educational System. Our goal is to contribute actively to the effort to form citizens who are inspired by the spirit of sustainability and also to form societies that will ensure quality of life for all.**

**Dear friends,**

**Closing this speech, I would like to congratulate you for this initiative and encourage you to continue your efforts contributing to this global task.**

**I wish every success in the proceedings of this Conference.**