

A warm welcome and a special thank you to all panellists for their encouraging messages. I commend Minister Koizumi for highlighting that an event uniting ministers, mayors and UN agencies is exactly the type of dialogue we need to raise NDC ambition in the lead up to COP 26.

Climate change requires commitment and action on ALL levels.

More and more cities around the world go far beyond their respective nations' ambitions. This also applies to Bonn: we aim to be climate neutral by 2035. While we have performed well in the past, reducing our CO2 emissions by 25 percent between 1990 and 2016, this ambitious goal requires a complete paradigm shift and with all stakeholders and citizens on board. We need to act together and are thus reaching out to our local communities, including initiatives such as Fridays for Future.

## **Where are we at in Bonn on July 29, 2020?**

Climate action in Bonn dates back to 1990, our base year for our accomplishments in emission reduction – I have mentioned that we are currently down 25 percent from this mark.

One focus area in our mitigation activities is increasing renewable energy use. With over 70 percent of renewable energy in the energy mix of our public energy provider, we are leading the way in Germany. We also provide support to home owners via our Bonn Energy Agency and with tools such as our solar cadaster. We have launched mobility and clean air initiatives and we are reaching out to citizens and communities through public campaigns. But despite all of this, we are facing a climate emergency, one our city council declared a year ago.

## **So, where do we want to go from here?**

Our first Bonn Sustainability Strategy was adopted in February 2019 – a systemic agenda with six fields of action targeting integrated sustainable urban development for Bonn. Just a few months later, the council announced its plan to achieve climate neutrality before 2035. As transport and buildings are our biggest emitters, we aim to drive change in both.

## **And how do we get there?**

Our main focus is mitigation – but we will also have to think about offsetting. We need to listen to science – but we also need to deliver based on science, tracking our goals, action and achievements, and producing replicable blueprints.

Multilevel governance and action are key. We are already piloting transformation, participating in a range of state and federal-level programmes. In the future, I hope that multilevel consultation and alliances become a new normal rather than a valued exception to the rule.

Our main asset is people. The people of Bonn are highly supportive of climate action. The citizen's board decided on a two-year participatory process to unlock this potential. The city council will debate the funding for that process soon. We cities and regions are in the same boat. We have wholeheartedly committed to ambitious targets, and we have the tools and the motivation to implement them. But we are aware of our limits and now need to find ways to move beyond them.

One way is by taking responsibility. Where we are owners of the process, we can act – by means of our territorial power or our ability to enforce state and federal law. Beyond legislation, there is of course an enormous potential for individual and economic action within our territories, which remains ours to unleash.

I look at Nigel Topping, who in recent years has mobilized immense business potential with “We Mean Business”, and also at our panellists from Asia, Australia and Europe. The world may have been rocked by the corona pandemic, but I firmly believe that with the spirit shown today – the DARING spirit – we can win the race to zero and thus the most important race of mankind.

Together, we are heading towards a super year 2021 with three Rio Conventions and a COP and we must make use of what is probably our last opportunity to turn the wheel. We will engage more cities and regions in ambitious climate action during the three-week virtual Daring Cities Conference hosted by ICLEI and Bonn this October. And we will strengthen multilevel cooperation. But no city, no region, no nation can do this alone. In the spirit of “Leave no one behind”, we need to get everyone on board now. Thank you!