

The Ocean Conference 5.- 9. júní 2017

Ávarp umhverfis- og auðlindaráðherra á **Partnership Dialogue 3: Minimizing and addressing ocean acidification**

Dear guests,

The acidification of our oceans due to uptake of carbon dioxide is, as we know, directly linked to human activities. For an island state like Iceland where sustainable fisheries is a backbone for the society, this is obviously very alarming.

The solution for keeping our oceans healthy and sustainable is **to acknowledge** and **address** the urgent matter of reducing carbon emissions from human based activities all over the world. - And also in increasing carbon stock in soil and vegetation, for instance by restoring degraded terrestrial ecosystems.

I am pleased to inform you that Iceland aims on building a low carbon economy in the near future and in the manifesto of the current Icelandic government it is clearly stated that the State will not give any further incentives to polluting heavy industries.

This is the largest future climate friendly decision already made by the government and will contribute greatly- to limit further carbon emissions from Iceland.

Iceland has ratified the Paris agreement and plans to reach its climate commitments in joint fulfilment with the European Union and Norway.

I must say that I find the US decision to pull out of the Paris agreement deeply disappointing. However I celebrate that states and cities in the US are still standing strong in fulfilling their goals thereof.

Together the people of the world **will make this happen** for our collective future.

In Iceland, nearly all energy production comes from renewables. Therefore our options for fulfilling the Paris agreement mostly lie in other sectors such as in transport and fisheries.

However we have set up a plan to reduce emissions in all sectors of our society, and registered a voluntary commitment to this end, related to our work on a new climate mitigation action plan.

But we do face challenges. In Iceland we have cold climate and harsh conditions for the local flora

We had severe land erosion in the earlier centuries, but- it gives us the opportunity to offset emissions via for instance, land restoration and reforestation.

We must have our efforts in reducing emissions from eroded land taken into account when fulfilling the Paris agreement. It would be reasonable to get full carbon credits for these additional climate friendly efforts.

Keep in mind that Iceland **already** produces its energy from 100% renewables.

And, speaking of the marine environment, these restoration efforts would contribute to reduce further acidification of the oceans due to **uptake of carbon and reduction** of CO2 emissions.

We must address and minimize ocean acidification and we must **apply all** available climate friendly solutions to react on it.

Thank you.