Statement

By

H.E. Mr. Thomas Mayr Harting
Head of Delegation
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at the Open Arria-Formula meeting on the role of Climate Change as a threat multiplier for Global Security

United Nations

New York

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Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

We welcome the initiative by Spain and Malaysia to hold this meeting to address the issue of climate change as a threat multiplier for global security. We are very much aware that climate change is, indeed, a threat multiplier: it threatens to undermine global stability and security because of its human consequences, including widespread hunger, water shortages, forced migration, conflict over scarce resources and disease. Those facing the most extreme risks are the poorest with the fewest resources and the least capacity to cope, despite contributing the least to the crisis.

We know for certain that climate change triggers not only humanitarian crises, but also political and economic instability, border disputes, ethnic tensions and "environmentally-induced" migration of millions of people around the world.

We would, therefore, encourage the United Nations Security Council to take climate security under its umbrella, building on its Presidential Statement of July 2011 and including an update of the 2009 Secretary General Report "Climate change and its possible security implications".

"Climate change does not belong to a remote future. It is all around us. It affects us directly. It is already impairing our security environment", to quote High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Frederica Mogherini. This is why it is of key importance that we get a universal, fair, ambitious and balanced legally-binding international climate agreement in Paris later this year. An agreement that ensures that the world remains on track to keep global warming below 2°C. We want the new global Agreement to provide a good balance in terms of how emission reductions, adaptation and finance and other means of implementation are addressed. It is crucial that everyone puts forward ambitious emission reduction contributions as soon as possible.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
The European Union and its Member States are already taking a number of concrete, important activities aiming at diminishing the serious consequences of climate change around the world: from better initializing predictions of climate and climate impacts through space observations to development of climate risk management practices that can cope with present and future risks; from building resilience and taking specific action on climate change adaptation to disaster risk reduction in fragile or vulnerable states.

The European Union will spend at least 20% of its near-trillion euro 2014-2020 budget on climate change-related action. As an example, there are currently at least 51 EU-sponsored climate change adaptation programmes in 38 countries and 8 regions, many of these our most fragile and conflict-affected partners.

Climate security is of key importance. In our interconnected world, our national security relies on human security around the world. By investing in resilience and adaptation efforts along with mitigation, we can help build people’s resilience to climate change, we can save lives and strengthen poor communities worldwide while ensuring a safer and more peaceful future.

I thank you.