



3 March 2014 - "We are running out of time", declared Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at a debate organised by Friends of Europe in Brussels. The debate was part of a series of discussions with inspiring personalities "[On the Road to Paris 2015](#)", and the UN Secretary-General addressed the audience about the urgency of addressing climate change and the need for a robust climate change agreement.

Since he took over the position of Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon has placed the issue of climate change at the top of his priorities and he urgently calls for the creation of a binding climate agreement by 2015.

While doing his utmost to address the crises in Syria, Ukraine and the Central African Republic, the Secretary General has not lost sight of the climate change threat. He recently visited Greenland and Kiribati and witnessed, first hand, the damages inflicted by climate change.

"In Kiribati", Ban told his audience, "I met a young boy who told me he is scared to go to bed at night for fear of being drowned in his sleep. And at the hotel, me and my wife received life jackets."

His experiences, along with the new UN [Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change](#) (IPCC) report, only further stress the need of an agreement at the upcoming climate summit in Paris in 2015.

“Though we are running out of time, it is not too late”, said Ban. His prescription for action consists of a legal agreement by 2015, investment in climate finance, creating a realistic price on carbon that reflects the real costs, and lastly, adopting the solutions that will work fastest and best – while adapting and scaling them up wherever and whenever we can.

Young students from around the world also had their chance at asking questions regarding the climate. When asking about what he would tell the sceptics, the SG replied: “Now, with five successive reports (by the IPCC) released, ... I think science has made it plainly clear. There is a climate change phenomenon, it’s coming, and it’s coming much, much faster than you’d expect.”

As he urged the young generation to challenge their leaders, senators, congressmen or CEO’s of business communities, he encouraged them to act and pointed out the possibilities democracy brings.

“You can choose your leaders who are much more committed to environmental issues, or leaders with a much more far-sighted vision”, Ban said.

Ban also stressed that climate change and sustainable development aren’t separate agendas, but rather two sides of the same coin.

“We are the leaders of today, but by tomorrow we will hand over the torch to the younger generation”, said Ban. “We have to hand over this earth environmentally sustainable and hospitable. That’s our collective responsibility”.

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