

G7 Speakers Meeting Declaration: “Addressing the Climate Crisis with Economic and Environmental Justice for All”

September 12, 2020

We, speakers/presidents of parliament of the member states of the G7, affirm that the COVID-19 pandemic and climate crisis require a robust and coordinated international response. By passing legislation, by approving national budgets and by holding governments to account, parliaments are a key element in the commitment of states to the well-being of our citizens and the environment. As leaders in the international community, we commit to act with urgency to provide a healthy, clean and sustainable environment for our children and grandchildren and generations to come.

The world is reeling from COVID-19. As of September 12, 2020, there have been more than 28 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 and the disease has claimed the lives of more than 900,000 people across the world. The pandemic has disrupted the regular life of our citizens, disproportionately hurt our most vulnerable communities and at-risk populations, including women and children, and destabilized our economies. We declare that our response to COVID-19, including vaccine development and its equitable distribution, will be based on science and medicine, focused on wide access rather than profitability, and informed by the knowledge that the pandemic will continue until it is addressed worldwide. As G7 nations, we have a moral, scientific and economic duty to serve as the standard-bearer for this global commitment.

Unfortunately, the climate crisis does not pause as governments address the pandemic. Our nations cannot choose to ignore the climate emergency while we address the immediate crisis presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both the health and climate crises have and will continue to require unprecedented government action. As parliaments develop legislation to rebound from the economic crisis caused by the pandemic, clean energy and other climate investments can power short- and long-term economic recovery.

The climate crisis is the existential threat of our time, jeopardizing the health and well-being of every family in every community around the world. Atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations in 2020 are among the highest averages ever recorded. The planet suffered through the second hottest year ever in 2019. As the Earth heats up, climate-related impacts, including heat waves, hurricanes, wildfires, droughts, and flooding, are worsening. The great rivers of our world are beginning to dry up, depriving millions of water, food, jobs, transportation and commerce. The degradation of the oceans is also a great matter of concern as we stated in Brest last year.

We shall also pay particular attention to environmental justice for economically vulnerable and front-line communities. Committing to fight against environmental injustice requires providing a healthy environment, equal opportunity and meaningful involvement in environmental decisions to all people, regardless of race, color, gender, orientation, national origin, belief, or socio-economic condition. Climate policy can end the perpetuation of systemic inequalities.

We reaffirm the central role played by parliaments in democratic life. Parliaments, which are the assemblies that bring together all the components of society, are the key institutions of democracy: parliaments represent the expression of the people through their legislative and oversight roles. We therefore call upon all parties to take action on the climate crisis in accordance with the Paris Agreement.

We pledge that we will maintain contacts between parliaments to ensure a high level of mobilization concerning the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate, the regular raising of questions linked to these crises and the dissemination of good practices. We believe that our parliaments must play a pivotal role in the response and recovery to COVID-19 and the fight to address the climate crisis with economic and environmental justice for all.