

ESTONIA

Statement by H. E. Ms. Aino Lepik von Wirén

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of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

113th Session of the Council

High-level segment

“The intersection between climate change, food security, migration and displacement”

Director General,

Excellences, distinguished delegates,

It is an honour to participate here today and to address you on behalf of Estonia. The topic of today's high-level meeting is as challenging and pertinent as ever.

The science is clear: climate change is happening and we see the effects everywhere. Droughts, floods and wildfires have all become more extreme, sea levels are rising, glaciers are shrinking. Three weeks ago, at the beginning of COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, UN Secretary-General António Guterres rightly said: “The clock is ticking. We are in the fight of our lives.... We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator.” With this grave reminder, he also called out for international solidarity across the board.

Solidarity is surely needed, as the impact of climate change reaches far beyond natural disasters and state borders. Large parts of the Global South are hit particularly hard by the effects of the climate crisis. The most vulnerable people in different parts of our planet are being driven from regions and countries, their homes, because it is becoming unsustainable, impossible even, to live there. Their livelihoods are destroyed, food insecurity is increasing. Estonia and our neighbours in the Global North might seem not to be affected by migration and displacement caused by climate change. Yet, it is in the Arctic where environment and ecosystems are affected more severely than in any other part of the world, being the fastest warming region on the planet. Still, it is global instability, conflict, and decreasing resources fuelled by climate change that urge us all to act now.

The world needs to pay more attention to how to increase the resilience of communities affected by climate change, so that people do not have to make the difficult decision to leave their homes. Anticipatory action is also crucial in addressing climate crisis phenomena as climate-related natural disasters can often be foreseen and thus their impact reduced.

Given the interlinkage between climate change, food insecurity, and migration, a new approach is called for. We need to apply the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach to address the global challenges that we are facing.

At the moment, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has triggered the worst refugee and humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War. It has also caused an energy crisis, leaving millions of people in a situation of energy poverty and demonstrates that reliance on fossil fuels is a precarious choice in every way. Achieving climate neutrality by transition to renewable energy is a desired way forward. Estonia was completely dependent on our local fossil fuels only 30 years ago but we are now working for the transition to take place. Estonia now produces 50% of electricity from renewables and we plan to double it by 2030. Innovation and smart solutions play a key part in Estonia's path towards climate neutrality. Our experience could benefit to global climate action and green transition.

Moreover, today's world should not be a world where millions of people do not know where their next meal will come from or hundreds of thousands of people face famine-like conditions. Russia's war against Ukraine has worsened dramatically the global food security crisis, as Russia has weaponised food and hunger since the very beginning of the war. Ending the Russian aggression is the most effective way to restore stability in the global food markets.

To conclude, Estonia is keeping the climate ambition high and we are committed to supporting those most vulnerable to climate change. We are financing the export of green technology solutions and know-how to developing

countries. We firmly believe that all indigenous communities should have a strong voice in discussions on tackling climate change.

I would also like to commend IOM for tackling this subject matter at this high-level session and for reminding us how interlinked climate change is with migration and food security.

Thank you for your attention!