



# BENELUX “TALANOA” DECLARATION



*Recalling* 60 years of successful cooperation following the adoption of the Benelux Treaty in 1958;

*Stressing* the common willingness to further improve cross-border cooperation, to the advantage of the Benelux citizen, entrepreneur, environment and society, and to continue to serve as an inspiring example for further European integration;

*Underlining* the importance and success of Benelux regional cooperation initiatives such as the North Sea Energy Cooperation, the Pentalateral Energy Forum, the Gas Platform, the Benelux Energy Expertise Network to support and facilitate the Energy Transition process cross border in the Benelux; and the recent initiatives in the field of hydrogen, clean mobility, circular economy, disaster risk preparedness and waste management;

*Recalling* further the Benelux Declaration on regional cooperation in the elaboration of integrated national energy and climate plans, adopted on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018;

*Underlining* the vulnerability of the Benelux member states to climate change, being densely populated and partly laying under sea level, in the light of recent reports on sea level rise;

*Acknowledging* the Benelux economy as the backbone for welfare and growth, depending also on energy intensive industries, interconnected infrastructures and intensive traffic using all modes;

*Having heard* the stories of participants of the Benelux Talanoa Dialogue on 24 September 2018 on ways to promote enhanced ambition in reaching the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The undersigned,

## *Towards achieving the Paris Agreement goals*

1. REAFFIRM that the achievement of the long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement requires carbon neutrality of our economy, reaching a ‘net-zero’ point as soon as possible.
2. ARE MINDFUL of the crucial role of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as a key driver for integrating ambitious climate action in national policy making and of the urgency to close the significant gap between the aggregate effect of current NDCs when implemented fully and the aggregate emission pathways consistent with holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1,5 °C above pre-industrial level.
3. ARE DETERMINED to continue showing leadership in the achievement of the objectives of the Paris Agreement, in the context of the Nationally Determined Contribution of the European Union and its Member States, and in cooperation with other Parties to the Agreement.

4. LOOK FORWARD to the outcome of the Talanoa Dialogue as an important step in bringing us closer to the achievement of the Paris Agreement objectives.
5. REITERATE that the IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1,5 °C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways will be a valuable source of information for the Dialogue and for Parties reviewing the ambition of their NDC.
6. URGE all Parties to the Paris Agreement to start, as soon as possible after COP24, preparations of their NDCs to be submitted by 2020, that are in line with the Agreement and its goals.
7. ENCOURAGE countries to elaborate at COP24 on possibilities for enhanced NDCs by 2020.

*EU leadership in global low carbon development*

8. ENCOURAGE other EU Member States and the European Commission to continue organizing before COP24 discussions with all stakeholders as further inputs to the Dialogue.
9. LOOK FORWARD TO the proposal for a Strategy for long-term EU greenhouse gas emissions reduction in accordance with the Paris Agreement, to be released by the European Commission in November 2018, which should include a trajectory towards net zero emissions by 2050 and negative emissions thereafter, be based on an in-depth analysis of the environmental, economic and social impacts of pathways coherent with the goals of the Paris Agreement and on the latest scientific knowledge, especially the IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1,5°C. The analysis underlying the proposal for an EU long-term strategy should also take into account cost-effectiveness, the wider societal costs and benefits of early action by the EU as related to other Parties' efforts, including costs of inaction and avoided health costs.
10. CALL on the EU to review its current NDC by 2020.

To that end,

11. INVITE the European Commission to examine, within three months upon the conclusion of the Talanoa Dialogue at COP24 in Katowice, options to increase in a balanced, transparent and equitable way the EU's NDC, in relation to the NDCs of all Parties, so as to ensure its consistency with a long-term trajectory consistent with carbon neutrality, taking into account Member States' national objectives, plans and strategies, as well as the impact of legislation adopted under the Clean Energy Package and other sector specific policies, in terms of reducing emissions and their economic and social effect.

Correspondingly,

12. CALL on the EU to consider announcing at COP 24 its readiness to review its NDC by 2020 taking into account the collective further effort needed and actions undertaken by all Parties to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement.
13. Also CALL on the EU to continue developing policies and measures as a further contribution to achieving emissions reductions by 2030 and beyond.
14. RECOGNISE that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the road transport sector are the largest single source of GHG emissions in Europe today and emissions have been increasing continuously since 2013, unlike other emitting sectors.
15. CALL on the EU to adopt corresponding legislation that imposes CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction standards that are consistent with the Paris Agreement objectives and EU climate objectives and ensures that investments for zero and very low emission vehicles will take place in the EU, ensuring jobs in the future all along the R&D, supply and production.
16. RECALLS the urgency and importance to revert the current trend in the road transportation emissions to allow the Member States to achieve their 2030 targets under the EU effort Sharing Regulation in a cost-efficient and timely manner, and avoid unjustifiable additional pressure on other ESR sectors or non-compliance costs for government budgets.

17. REAFFIRM their commitment to prepare national Long-term Low Emissions Strategies in line with the Paris Agreement objectives and the EU Long-term Strategy for Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction, taking into account the IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1,5°C, and in accordance with paragraph 35 of Decision 1/CP.21, Article 4, paragraph 19 of the Paris Agreement and Article 14 of the EU Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union.
18. ENCOURAGE all Parties to the Paris Agreement to formulate and communicate long-term strategies by 2020.

*Making finance flows consistent with low emissions and climate-resilient development*

19. STRESS the need for innovative finance instruments in addition to public finance to allow fulfilling the commitment of the annual 100 billion dollar goal in the field of international climate finance.
20. RECOGNISE the need for enhanced transparency on the delivery and mobilisation of climate support, in order to strengthen the effective implementation of NDCs by developing countries.
21. ARE COMMITTED to scaling up the mobilisation of climate finance, in particular to assist developing countries to implement their Nationally Determined Contributions.

Also,

22. RECOGNISE that NDCs making the transformation to low-emissions and climate-resilient development, and include bankable projects, will trigger scaling-up of climate finance.
23. STRESS the need of making financial flows consistent with low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development, and the need for governments to provide investors with a stable regulatory framework that facilitates climate smart investment.
24. UNDERLINE in that context the importance of making climate risks a pivotal criterion in public and private investment decisions, in order to avoid stranded assets in the long term transition towards carbon neutrality.
25. ENCOURAGE financial and corporate organizations to implement the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures in order to deepen the understanding of climate risks.
26. WELCOME the European Commission's proposals in the context of the Action Plan on Sustainable Finance as a useful contribution to making our financial system work towards the EU's climate and sustainable development agenda.
27. RECOGNISE that efforts need to be made to channel a substantial share of public climate finance for developing countries towards adaptation finance and towards increasing the resilience and building the capacity of the poorest and particularly vulnerable developing countries to respond to the impacts and consequences of climate change.
28. EMPHASISE the need to support developing countries to mainstream climate objectives into development strategies, and in particular for adaptation considerations to be integrated at all levels into development plans.
29. CONSIDER that putting a price on greenhouse gas emissions that adequately reflects environmental externalities and phasing out environmentally harmful subsidies is a key element in creating an enabling environment for encouraging low carbon investment.
30. COMMIT to analysing pathways, options and modalities for implementing a meaningful and effective price on carbon, taking into account the need to address potential negative distributive impacts on households, and maintaining the competitiveness of and opportunities for businesses.

31. EMPHASISE the need for the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework to secure an increased focus on climate change, allowing for *inter alia* the reinforcement of investments in climate research and innovation, in safe and sustainable energy, energy efficiency, circular economy and resource efficiency, buildings and transport infrastructure for the transition towards a low greenhouse gas emission economy, while making sure that all EU funding does not have detrimental impacts on the ability of the EU to reach its medium- and long-term climate targets or deliver in line with the Paris Agreement.

Concomitantly, the Benelux countries

32. UNDERTAKE to pursue those goals in their domestic policies and through cross-border co-operation, including by aligning economic and industry policies and stimulus programmes with the need for growing investment in low carbon development.

#### *Circular economy*

33. RECOGNISE the significant contribution of the transition towards a circular economy to achieve the Paris Agreement objectives, both directly, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions of material use in production and consumption, and indirectly, by securing supply of raw materials and energy that are needed for upscaling the energy transition, such as materials for wind turbines, batteries, etc. and adaptation investments.

34. ENCOURAGE all Parties and relevant stakeholders to consider Circular Economy measures in their domestic policies and long term low emission strategies.

35. CALLS upon the European Commission to develop an indicator to assess the climate impact of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan.

#### *International cooperative action*

In holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C and in pursuit of limiting the temperature increase to 1,5°C, while recognizing that the Paris Agreement objectives cover all sectors of the economy,

36. CALL on all States to work through the ICAO and the IMO to set and implement ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets for international aviation and international maritime transport and to adopt accompanying short, medium and long term measures, including market based measures, which should ensure environmental integrity and prevent any form of double counting across all mitigation actions inside and outside the UNFCCC.

37. AFFIRM that our countries will continue to take the lead on these issues.

#### *Putting people at the centre*

38. UNDERSCORE that whereas climate change policies and measures and low emission development strategies have the potential of contributing significantly to economic growth and job creation, they should be designed so as to minimise any adverse social and economic impacts, including on competitiveness of the EU economy, taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent green jobs, and of the need for appropriate social protection and labour market policies.

39. ASSERT that climate policy, low carbon and climate resilient development should be people-centred and should be embedded in a broader context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, respect for human rights, the rights of indigenous peoples, and gender equality.

40. AFFIRM the need for continued close dialogue and cooperation with all stakeholders, on the international, EU and national level, in the further development and implementation of strategies and policies aimed at the low carbon transition.

40. CALL upon all stakeholders to develop their own decarbonization pathways.

*BENELUX action*

The Ministers of the Benelux wish to undertake action and therefore suggest to

41. CREATE an open and transparent platform that welcomes all relevant and responsible actors, including the sectors and economic operators, to give effect to this Declaration.
42. OPEN UP the existing regional cooperation (Benelux Energy Expertise Network) for Climate specific issues.
43. INVESTIGATE the impact of using the BENELUX scale and cross border instruments to catalyse the transition to a low carbon society.
44. MAKE optimal use of the regional cooperation and specifically the Regional Energy and Climate Dialogue established on 11 June 2018 to further synergies in the elaboration of integrated national energy and climate plans and the drafting and implementation of national Long-term Low Emission Strategies.
45. CONTINUE a close dialogue on technical and political level on the most promising joint pathways towards decarbonization.

28 November 2018

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