

Speech by Minister For Foreign Affairs of Denmark Mr. Per Stig Møller at the high-level dialogue on Climate Change and International Security hosted by the Government of Denmark and the international Peace Institute New York 22. September 2009

I would like to welcome you to today's meeting, which is very timely less than 80 days before the climate conference in Copenhagen. I would also like to thank The International Peace Institute for hosting the meeting. Thank you. The climate conference in Copenhagen in December presents a unique opportunity for the world community to take action on climate change. To put it bluntly, it is in December we need to converge and reach a global agreement, if we are to have a fair chance of catching up with the climate challenge.

Because it is an enormous challenge. As you know, there are still tough negotiations ahead. Many countries are digging in and sticking to well-known positions. We need more progress and more flexibility in the negotiations. That's why we are around the table here – as the foreign policy community – need to pull our weight and push harder for an agreement.

The popular saying on Wall Street these days - "too big to fail" - certainly holds true about climate change and international security. The security implications of climate change are too big a problem for us to fail in our policy response. We need to get it right. And the opportunity to get it right comes in Copenhagen in December.

We have to avoid a scenario where climate change pushes fragile states into turmoil, a scenario where we witness large and destabilizing movements of "climate refugees", and where we see a frantic scramble for natural resources

around the planet that puts our security at risk. If we take action now, we still have a possibility to maintain control of events. If we do not, events will control us and that is both dangerous and irresponsible, when international security is at stake.

The focus of today's meeting is twofold. Firstly, to discuss what the effects of climate change will be on regional security and regional co-operation, based on examples from Africa and the Middle East, and secondly what role can the United Nations play in managing the security aspects of climate change?

We need to better understand the relationship between climate change and security and to ensure that we have the capacity to deal with the consequences. The foreign policy community has to drive a process of increased international cooperation on climate change and international security. In doing this, we need to strengthen the capacity of organizations such as the UN and the EU to deal with the issue. That is also why my ministry, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has financed two case-studies on climate change and security in Africa and the Middle East. We need more knowledge in order for us to act wisely and vigorously in the future.

We also need to get the security dimension integrated in a broader context. It will affect all dimensions of foreign policy: humanitarian aid, trade, investment, energy and not least development cooperation.