

## **Conference „Global Contract Based on the Principle of Climate Justice – The Need for a New Approach Concerning International Relations“**

European Parliament, Brussels, 11 November 2008

### ***Welcome address by Dr. Franz Fischler***

Ladies and Gentleman,

I warmly welcome you all to the conference „A Global Contract based on the Principle of Climate Justice – The Need for a New Approach Concerning International Relations“.

We have so many important personalities with us today that I am not able to greet everybody personally. Let me just bring to your attention: I would like to welcome EU-Commissioner for the Environment Stavros Dimas as the representative of the European Commission and our youngest speaker, Felix Finkbeiner. He is the representative of the youth and of the UNEP-Junior-Board.

I want to thank all the speakers and supporters of this conference, who have made it possible to organise this large international event. Many thanks to the Members of the European Parliament hosting this event, the different departments and services of the European Parliament assisting us in the organisation, the sponsors and other cooperation partners especially Mr. Kruse, a managing partner of next practise corporation, who made it possible to work for the first time in the European parliament with a novel online consultation tool.

I am very glad that so many have come because our topic today is no more and no less than one of the most urgent and complex challenges of our societies. Let me be very clear: Our current efforts to combat global warming and climate change are totally inadequate. Currently we are no more teetering on the brink, we are starting to jump. If we are not willing to change our policies radically, if we are not willing to change our lifestyles and the way we do business, we will end up in a world we don't want to live in.

Talking about climate justice means to talk about a drastic global imbalance:

For 200 years, the industrialised countries have experienced an unprecedented economic growth. This has been going hand in hand with a constant increase of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – emissions, which still are growing at an increasing speed. In order to avoid that climate change which becomes more and more dangerous, the greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced drastically so that we can achieve the EU-target of limiting global warming to two degrees Celsius.

Unfairly the poor countries have to bear the heaviest burden when it comes to the damage caused by climate change. Most developing countries – and thus the majority of the world population - have not had any chance to share or benefit from the enormous economic growth. As you know today as many as one billion people live in extreme poverty – As it is shown in the last UN-Human Development Report this number can increase by 600 millions until 2080 as a consequence of climate change.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Let us be clear. There is no excuse: Science has shown where we stand! And there is no time left to wait and see positions. Therefore, we must discuss here and today the core questions of the issue:

Firstly, what emission target, or global warming limit should we set so that it is environmentally effective, economically feasible and equitable and just?

Secondly, what should be done to meet these targets? How could we establish a global carbon market? How can we manage the necessary development of green technologies and the necessary changes in our energy systems? How should we fight against deforestation and land use change?

And thirdly, how should developing countries contribute to the global objectives and what is the right balance of efforts between the developed and the developing world?

Our big task today is to find convincing answers, and a common ground to agree on a global contract on climate change, which is effective and just. Therefore our conference has two main aims:

Firstly, we want to open a broad and critical discussion on the policy paper that was prepared by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, the co-organiser of this event. We look forward to your comments and we will integrate them into the communication process.

Secondly, instead of entering into a discussion with preconceived opinions or documents, we prefer listening to you first and elaborate a joint memorandum afterwards. This memorandum, which will be prepared after the conference, will be our contribution to the Conference of Parties (COP) in Poznan, which starts on the first of December 2008.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, let's roll up our sleeves up and go for it. Thank you once again for your coming. I wish us a very fruitful and productive discussion.