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RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE AUX PAYS-BAS

Conférence sur le climat :

“Climate change and sea level rise by 2100: How do we deal with it ?”

(20 novembre 2018, Résidence de France à La Haye)

Discours prononcé par Philippe Lalliot, Ambassadeur de France aux Pays-Bas

Mesdames et Messieurs les Députés,
Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs,
Mesdames et Messieurs les Directeurs généraux et directeurs,
Mesdames et Messieurs, cher amis,

I'm very happy to welcome you tonight to discuss and exchange about the concrete consequences of the global climate change for a seminar that is being co-organized with Germany and held, year after year, alternatively at the German and at the French Residence.

What used to be a theoretical threat has now become a reality. The rise of the temperature has indeed already led to an increase of the frequency and the gravity of natural disasters.

A bit more than a year ago, France and the Netherlands have been severely hit by hurricane Irma. On the French side of the island only, we deplored 11 victims and more than 200 wounded. 95% of the buildings were damaged and more than 20% were totally destroyed. The damage is estimated at more than 3 billions euros. Again recently, several countries, including mine, have suffered intense and large-scale meteorological phenomena, storms, hurricanes, floods, droughts or fires.

To face such a global issue as climate change and its many consequences, we need a global response. And I would like to thank my colleagues Ambassadors who have accepted to be with us tonight in sharing our ideas and experience.

The next COP24 in Katowice will be an essential milestone in the pursuit of two major objectives: the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement on the one hand, and the enhancement of States' ambition by 2020 on the other. The

Ambassador of Poland will join us a bit later and I know we are in good hands and can rely on the full commitment of Poland to reach ambitious roadmaps.

Dear Friends,

The topic we have chosen this year, *Climate change and sea level rise by 2100: How do we deal with it?*”, is indeed of utmost and urgent importance.

According to the conclusions of the 2018 Facilitation Dialogue and the IPCC report on 1.5°C, if nothing is done, at the current rate of our greenhouse gas emissions, sea level could rise by 75 cm by 2100 and would have irreversible consequences for island territories and coastal zones.

Sea level rise is an issue for everyone. 80% of the global population and the most important part of the economic activities are indeed located at less than 500 km from the sea. Strengthening the resilience of our communities is so an emergency and a necessity as well.

On this pressing issue, the Dutch paved the way. Their expertise in water management ranks among the first in the world. We will tonight benefit from the experience of both Deltares and the Delta Commission.

In France, we have already taken concrete actions, especially to help the most vulnerable countries. By 2020, 1.5 billion euros of our bilateral development aid is earmarked to adaptation. Alongside with Germany and the Netherlands, France is contributing to the Climate Risk Early Warning Systems funds, the so-called CREWS Funds. These are only a couple of examples.

We think we must rely on the existing framework, especially the Paris Agreement and the SDG 13, which must be implemented. Concretely, governments have to protect the coastlines from flooding risks, renovate and adapt the existing infrastructures but also build new infrastructures while taking into account the climate risk. In order to do so, it is mandatory to not only build « grey/heavy » infrastructures (such as dikes) but also develop solutions based upon nature, which use ecosystem-based services. For example, restore coastal plants ecosystems, whose roots can be used to stabilize sand dunes and, therefore, limit coastal erosion.

Keeping the rise in sea level at less than one meter by 2100 seems today as difficult as staying below the two degrees of warming requested by the Paris Agreement on Climate. But we must keep setting ambitious goals because what is the stake is no more no less than the world we will leave as our legacy to future generations.

I would like now to give the floor to our moderator, Mr Jaap KWADIJK, Scientific Director Deltares and expert in Climate adaptation for water management who will introduce the topic and the panellists.