

Your Royal Majesty, Mr. President and First Lady, Ministers. Dear People of Iceland.

We are representatives of the UN Sustainable Development Goals Youth Council, Mathias and Kristbjörg.

Sovereignty.

At the turn of the twentieth century this concept was uppermost in the minds of the Icelandic people. Icelanders dreamt of having the freedom to control their own destiny and that of their nation. As previously noted, this important goal was reached in the year 1918.

However, this meant that the safety net had, in a sense, disappeared and we, the Icelandic people, needed to handle all adversities by ourselves.

But the Icelandic people did not despair.

No, when something is wrong, the Icelandic people have, through the years, shown a strong will to carry out the task at hand, and our solidarity has gotten us through some difficult times.

The Great Frost Winter, the Spanish flu, the Katla eruption. Earlier generations suffered incredible hardships and were much worse prepared for them than we are today. The people lived in poor housing, and under harsh conditions.

But the Icelandic fighting spirit shone through and the Icelandic people overcame those difficulties, much as they had those they faced before.

These generations of Icelanders were pioneers who created a better life for those present here today. Their struggles have brought us the tools we need for resolving even bigger problems.

[because] Now we are facing one of the biggest challenges for humanity so far: climate change. It is a complicated problem and not easily solved, but the Icelandic people cannot ignore it.

One tends to think, when faced with such a big, long-term problem as climate change certainly is: Who am I? What is my impact in the larger context? I understand completely. This fight will not end tomorrow, or next weekend, or even next year. It can be wearying to continue the fight when the effects are not immediately discernible.

But, as we mentioned before, the Icelandic fighting spirit has pulled us through many hardships and if we put our minds to it, it can pull us through this one. Iceland, this small

island in the middle of the ocean, has so much energy. Iceland has more writers than most nations – per capita, that is.

Iceland was the strongest team in the World Cup – per capita.

More international meetings and conferences are held in Iceland than elsewhere – per capita.

Iceland pollutes more than any other nation in Europe – per capita.

In 2015 the United Nations set out 17 Global Sustainable Development Goals. One of the main goals is to reduce the effects of climate change and to take action to combat them. These are weighty and ambitious goals that all the nations of the world must reach before 2030.

I am going to repeat myself. 2030. That's 12 years. We have 12 years to radically change the way of life and community structures of the global population so that we do not eradicate the ability of the next generation to meet its needs.

In 12 years, I will be 29

and I will be 30;

in 12 years, it will be too late to stop it.

The future is very uncertain, but it is the future of all of us. Most of us who are gathered here today will live to see it happen. Therefore, it is important that every voice in the community will be heard, regardless of age, race, skin colour, religion or political opinions.

And we cannot stop at just having the conversation. Drastic action will have to be taken in the coming years. We must unite to face the problem. What kind of world do we want to make for ourselves, for our parents and our children?

If we do not get ourselves straightened out by 2030, we are out.

We only have one life and one planet Earth.

Around here, the belief seems to be that the Icelandic people need not worry about environmental issues because of how small we are, that it doesn't matter how we mistreat our land and natural environment because we don't matter in the larger context. This point of view must be eradicated.

One of the prime duties of those who inhabit the Earth at any given time is to pass it on to their descendants in as good a condition as it was handed to them, i.e. that the exploitation of

the Earth's resources at any given time does not reduce the abilities of those who will inherit it to survive. The concept of sustainable development was defined in order to encompass this thought. The concept is defined as human activity that fulfils the needs of today without diminishing the ability of tomorrow's generations to meet their needs.

We are the people who will have to face the worst effects of global warming. It is no longer a question of what the next generations will have to handle. We are the generation that will have to understand the seriousness of the issue. We are the generation that will have to act. Because we are the last generation that has the chance to do so.