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THE SPOKEN WORD COUNTS

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Introduction

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished scholars,

I feel honoured to stand in front of you today.

In this room we have some of the best climate researchers in the world.

You hold the answers to one of the most important questions of our time:

How to understand and tackle climate change?

Knowledge is the key

The world is faced with a global financial crisis.

The situation is too grave to be overlooked.

While we focus on solving the financial crisis we must not forget about the climate.

Otherwise we could soon have fatal problems on our hands.

We should, perhaps, try to handle the financial crisis and climate change at the same time by stimulating sustainable economic growth.

Clearly, something needs to be done.

Already today, we see the consequences of climate change in every part of the world.

Famines, hurricanes and floodings are only to increase if we do not commit to change.

Change, however, is not a simple thing.

Firstly, one needs to know what to change.

Secondly, one needs to know how change should be carried out.

This requires knowledge and knowledge requires research.

The raw material of our knowledge about the climate is: data!

Data is the sole most important resource upon which scientists in the field of climate and climate change are working.

As our pursuit for knowledge continues to grow, so does our need for accurate data.

When monitoring the Arctic ice pack, images acquired from space have become a powerful and efficient means to enable a better understanding of the trends of the ice movements.

The realization that climate change is occurring and that it is most likely caused by human activities is relatively new – and has only come about in the last few years.

And this is thanks to research.

As the research minister of Denmark I am fully aware of the essential role of research also in regards to climate change.

Research is the creation of new knowledge and, thus, the very fundament of a knowledge society.

As politicians, we must make the necessary decisions so that scholars around the world are able to create the knowledge necessary to avoid the disasters that threaten all of us.

And we must be ready to make the necessary decisions once we have this knowledge at hand.

Danish Initiatives

The consequences of climate change are emerging in all corners of the world, also here in Denmark, where, for example, extremely heavy rains have resulted in the flooding of roads and basements of buildings.

Over the last 25 years Denmark's economy has grown by around 75 percent with nearly stable energy consumption.

But the government has ambitious goals and will therefore focus on *reducing* energy consumption and CO2 emissions.

The goal is a low carbon economy.

It is obvious that we have to increase funding for research and development if we shall fulfil those ambitious goals

From 2010 and onwards the Government of Denmark will spend 13 million euros annually on energy research and development of low emission technology.

The vision of the Danish government is to create sustainable economic growth.

Research is an important element for this vision.

We have already launched ambitious research schemes on low emission technology.

More is on its way.

Later this year, I will personally launch an ambitious strategy on green research.

The strategy will contain elements that are of special value to climate research.

The strategy will help to realise our green vision.

It will benefit the environment, but also help to stimulate sustainable economic growth.

The green growth, so to speak, is not a fantasy.

Green growth is a real option.

Climate change is universal.

And the responsibility to combat climate change is by nature a universal one as well.

Let us show the world that we are up to the task.

Let us prove that we prioritise the future by investing more in research on climate change.

Conclusion

I am happy that decision makers have a common reference point in the UN.

The UN Panel on Climate Change is of utmost value to the global awareness of climate change. To this day the panel's 2007 report stands out as ground breaking work.

The report became a source of inspiration and gave life to new knowledge on climate change.

The purpose of the congress here is to report on the results of this new research.

I am delighted to learn that the organizers of the Congress are producing two products – an academic book to be published by Cambridge University Press - which I am sure will attract a large academic audience.

And a short document that will present the major messages emerging from this new research in a language that is accessible not only for policy makers but also for the general public.

I am a journalist by training, and I feel confident that such a document will be attractive for the media.

The document will be an important instrument for passing on knowledge of climate change and the risks that it poses for society to a broad audience.

Knowledge - just as climate change – should be beyond borders.

I wish you all a fruitful congress.