News
EarthBeat

by NCR Staff

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Here's video of Greta Thunberg's remarks at Davos on Jan. 21.

Here's the text of Greta Thunberg's remarks Jan. 21 at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland:

> One year ago I came to Davos and told you that our house is on fire. I said I wanted you to panic. I've been warned that telling people to panic about the climate crisis is a very dangerous thing to do. But don't worry. It's fine. Trust me, I've done this before and I can assure you it doesn't lead to anything.
>
> And, for the record, when we children tell you to panic we're not telling you to go on like before. We're not telling you to rely on technologies that don't even exist today at scale and that science says perhaps never will.
>
> We are not telling you to keep talking about reaching "net zero emissions" or "carbon neutrality" by cheating and fiddling around with numbers. We are not telling you to "offset your emissions" by just paying someone else to plant trees in places like Africa while at the same time forests like the Amazon are being slaughtered at an infinitely higher rate.
>
> Planting trees is good, of course, but it's nowhere near enough of what is needed and it cannot replace real mitigation and rewilding nature.

Let’s be clear. We don’t need a “low carbon economy.” We don’t need to “lower emissions.” Our emissions have to stop if we are to have a chance to stay below the 1.5-degree target. And, until we have the technologies that at scale can put our emissions to minus, then we must forget about net zero. We need real zero.

Because distant net zero emission targets will mean absolutely nothing if we just continue to ignore the carbon dioxide budget — that applies for today, not distant future dates. If high emissions continue like now even for a few years, that remaining budget will soon be completely used up.

The fact that the U.S.A. is leaving the Paris accord seems to outrage and worry everyone, and it should. But the fact that we’re all about to fail the commitments you signed up for in the Paris Agreement doesn’t seem to bother the people in power even the least.

Any plan or policy of yours that doesn’t include radical emission cuts at the source, starting today, is completely insufficient for meeting the 1.5-degree or well-below-2-degrees commitments of the Paris Agreement.

And again, this is not about right or left. We couldn’t care less about your party politics. From a sustainability perspective, the right, the left as well as the center have all failed. No political ideology or economic structure has been able to tackle the climate and environmental emergency and create a cohesive and sustainable world. Because that world, in case you haven’t noticed, is currently on fire.

You say children shouldn’t worry. You say: “Just leave this to us. We will fix this, we promise we won’t let you down. Don’t be so pessimistic.”

And then, nothing. Silence. Or something worse than silence. Empty words and promises which give the impression that sufficient action is being taken.

All the solutions are obviously not available within today’s societies. Nor do we have the time to wait for new technological solutions to become available to start drastically reducing our emissions. So, of course the transition isn’t going to be easy. It will be hard. And unless we start facing

this now together, with all cards on the table, we won't be able to solve this in time.

In the days running up to the 50th anniversary of the World Economic Forum, I joined a group of climate activists demanding that you, the world's most powerful and influential business and political leaders, begin to take the action needed.

We demand at this year's World Economic Forum, participants from all companies, banks, institutions and governments:

Immediately halt all investments in fossil fuel exploration and extraction.

Immediately end all fossil fuel subsidies.

And immediately and completely divest from fossil fuels.

We don't want these things done by 2050, 2030 or even 2021. We want this done now.

It may seem like we're asking for a lot. And you will of course say that we are naïve. But this is just the very minimum amount of effort that is needed to start the rapid sustainable transition.

So either you do this or you're going to have to explain to your children why you are giving up on the 1.5-degree target. Giving up without even trying. Well I'm here to tell you that, unlike you, my generation will not give up without a fight.

The facts are clear, but they're still too uncomfortable for you to address. You just leave it because you think it's too depressing and people will give up. But people will not give up. You are the ones who are giving up.

Last week I met with Polish coal miners who lost their jobs because their mine was closed. And even they had not given up. On the contrary, they seem to understand the fact that we need to change more than you do.

I wonder, what will you tell your children was the reason to fail and leave them facing a climate chaos that you knowingly brought upon them? That it seemed so bad for the economy that we decided to resign the idea of

securing future living conditions without even trying?

Our house is still on fire. Your inaction is fueling the flames by the hour. And we are telling you to act as if you loved your children above all else.

Thank you.

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