

ASG Hart's Remarks to the Global Engagement Summit

Distinguished colleagues and friends.

Welcome to the United Nations.

I want to start by thanking UNA-USA for inviting me to the largest annual gathering of UN supporters in the United States.

Your important work of bringing together community leaders, students, lawmakers, and

But this will require urgent action on four critical fronts:

First, we must end our addiction to fossil fuels and drastically reduce carbon pollution.

Global emissions must be cut by half this decade if we are to have a fighting chance of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees. That means far more ambitious carbon pollution cuts from G20 countries now and over the course of this decade. The twenty largest economies account for around 80% of global emissions. We cannot close the global emissions gap without their leadership.

And let me be clear.

Clean fossil fuels do not exist. Less dirty is still dirty. Brown, grey, blue -- nothing is truly clean unless it is fully green.

The current scramble we are seeing around the world to expand fossil fuel production primarily driven by the greed of the fossil fuel industry and their enablers is - as the Secretary-General has said - inconsistent with human survival. We cannot continue to allow the fossil fuel industry, their financial enablers, and political protectors to hold us and the global economy to ransom.

This must be the decade of renewables. Wind and solar are now far cheaper than fossil fuels in most parts of the world. The world is set to add as much renewable power in the next five years as it did in the past 20 years. But we need to move much further and faster.

Let's not forget - this is a monumental economic opportunity for the United States and every economy to power a new era of clean air, decent jobs, and economic growth.

Fourth and finally, we need to strengthen international cooperation and create a culture of transparency, accountability and credibility.

One country alone cannot solve the climate crisis. Climate action should be an area for cooperation and collaboration – not competition, conflict, or confrontation.

The Secretary-General has championed new models of cooperation like the Just Energy Transition Partnerships - organized around the leadership of South Africa, Indonesia, and Viet Nam - to accelerate their transition away from coal to renewables. He has also called on the G20 to unite around a Climate Solidarity Pact in which they make a collective efforts in the 2020s to keep the 1.5-degree target alive.

Under this pact, developed countries would provide financial and technical assistance to help major emerging economies accelerate their renewable energy transition. But we also need the leadership and commitment of the private sector.

Friends,

Over the past few years, more and more businesses have made net-zero commitments.

But unfortunately, some were simply public relations stunts and exercises in corporate greenwashing. This prompted the Secretary-General to set up an Expert Group which recently issued a how-to guide for making credible, accountable net-zero pledges.

I urge you to support the Secretary-General's call for all corporate leaders to act on this important report.

He has asked them to put forward credible and transparent transition plans for achieving net-zero before his Climate Ambition Summit in September this year.

The transition to net-zero must be grounded in real emissions cuts – companies must not rely on low integrity carbon credits and shadow markets. We need all hands-on deck, not new loopholes that allow companies to keep polluting.

Friends,

Dr. King also warned us that there is such a thing as being too late. Let us heed this warning.

I have a very special message to the many young people gathered here today. You inspire us, but I'll be frank. My generation has failed you. I urge you to continue to hold us and attendees to account. And never give up the fight. The UN will always be on your side.

Friends,

The power of change is in your hands as