

Matteo Renzi at the UN. "The International Community is Finally Working Together"

Judith Harris (April 22, 2016)



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NEW YORK -- At United Nations headquarters in New York City, Premier Matteo Renzi was one of 175 world leaders who signed, in a single day, an historic agreement on protection of the climate. The accord known as COP21 was adopted at a conference in Paris last December, and calls for limiting the rise in global temperature to "well below" 2 degrees Celsius, while striving for still lower, or 1.5 degrees. Among the signatories on Earth Day, Friday, were 60 heads of state. "Today is a great day because the international community is finally working together," said the Premier. "In politics the thinking is more usually only in the short term."



The two-day UN session was formally called the "High Level Thematic Debate on SustainableDevelopment Goals" (SDGS), which concluded with the signing Friday. With Renzi in New York was the Italian delegation headed by Environment Minister Gian Luca Galletti. For Renzi himself, "We are very proud as Italians for the results, but I think the political message is what is most important, which is that politics can offer help to the next generation. And so, in the coming month, we shall continue to work together for implementation of the accord." In a tweet Minister Galletti wrote, "What emotion -- the world at New York City is signing the COP21 agreement. Italy and Europe are there, protagonists."

Following the signing UN General Secretary Ban Ki Moon congratulated Renzi, who later met with the presidents of Mauritius, Guyana, Niger, Angola, the Marshall Islands, and others from South America. (To see the signing, go to [>>](#) [2])

Renzi later spoke by telephone with Democratic candidate for president Hillary Clinton, on the campaign trail in Pennsylvania, and met personally with former U.S. President Bill Clinton at his foundation headquarters in New York.

"We can talk about renewable energy, about the transport system, about efficiency in homes all over the world," Renzi told the UN assembly. "But I think that the real challenge today, in the presence of so many heads of states and of governments, of civil society leaders, of delegations of local authorities -- if you close your eyes just for one second and imagine it -- it is this: you can see our children and grandchildren to whom finally, for the first time after many years, we offer a vision, a gesture of responsibility, for our children and grandchildren. Finally we send forth a message of hope."

Global warming is the enemy, and, prior to the signing, actor Leonardo DiCaprio reminded the delegates that "The world is watching us." By 2020 the 31-page agreement must be ratified, accepted or approved by at least 55 countries which represent 55% of global emissions of greenhouse gases, but pressures are to speed up the process. The stated aims are also to increase funding for a reduction of greenhouse gases and for developing tools that will help curb climate change.

In an interview Tuesday with the Italian daily *Il Sole-24 Ore* Renzi said that, "Today [in Italy] we have 39% of renewable energy. But we shall raise this to 50% within a short time. Enough of talking about the environment -- we must move forward on the road to sustainable development." We are working with Moscow, but we must diversify, he added, especially with African states. "For us, working in Africa will mean giving a future to the local people. We have been aware of this for some time, while Germany and the others are only now catching on that internationalization can also help achieve migratory equilibrium." That is, a wiser energy policy can help reduce the problem of mass migration by promoting jobs in Africa for Africans.

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