

SPEAKING NOTES PITCH DELTACOMMISSARIS – side event FFA 2018, 16 mei 2018

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

- Also my congratulations to Christiana Figueres Olsen on receiving the International Four Freedoms Award that she accepted today on behalf of so many people involved.
- When I look around, I see a large number of stakeholders represented at this table.
- From my point of view, the challenge breaks down into two component parts:
 - We must expend our best efforts to prevent, as far as is reasonably possible, the Earth from warming faster and more than is currently threatening to happen. Compliance with the Paris agreement, for which Ms Figueres received her award today, is crucial to this end.
 - The other side of the climate coin is the adaptation side. Even if we all outstrip our Paris commitments, substantial spatial measures will be required at many locations across the globe to keep the population safe. Particularly in delta areas such as the one in whose very heart this Middelburg venue is located.
- And for me, the essence is: the one is not viable without the other.
- Let me take you on a brief tour of the world of **climate adaptation**, my world!
- The Netherlands is a low-lying country, which in the past has been severely hit by floods almost every 50 to 60 years. Disasters to which we *responded* every time, the last time in 1953 resulting in the construction of the famous Delta Workshere in the South-West of the Netherlands.
- In 2005, the scenarios of IPCC and the hurricane Katrina in New Orleans demonstrated in one fell swoop that a different approach was needed.
- Not *responding*, but rather *acting*. We changed our strategy.
- In 2010, the Dutch government opted for the introduction of a **Delta Act**, which has since safeguarded the flood risk management of the Dutch delta.
- Supplemented by a **Delta Fund**, a budget for financing measures of around 1 billion euros a year.

- And a yearly national **Delta Programme**, in which government bodies, businesses, research institutes, and NGOs collaborate under the direction of a government commissioner to achieve national goals: the physical safety of our country and safeguarding our long-term water supply.
- With effect from 2010, in my capacity as **Delta Programme Commissioner**, I have been responsible for the realisation and preparation of the Delta Programme. A programme featuring measures for the six years ahead. Looking ahead to measures for the twelve years beyond that, and with a focus on 2050 and 2100. Every year, implementation plans are drawn up and monitored, presented to government and parliament – currently focused on three different domains: flood risk management, fresh water supply, and spatial adaptation.
- The Delta Programme connects all these plans. It connects regions in a national framework. It connects generations. It connects public and private parties, that *collectively* work on flood risk management and the freshwater supply. And it connects these tasks which were possible with other challenges that we are also faced with.
- Over the past eight years, all the Delta Programme partners and I have learned that:
 - predictability and stability in the implementation of measures are of paramount importance; a long term approach is needed;
 - depoliticizing the preparation of policy decisions is conducive to the process;
 - it is important to have structural funds available for funding measures.
 - Connecting and involving all partners working together on higher and legal goals, well understood in our country.
- Securing public support, developing and encouraging ideas, looking for innovations, and combining know-how in joint fact-finding processes are key elements in the Delta Programme approach. This generates comfort and energy. Meanwhile, a large community has formed in the Netherlands – the **Delta Community** – comprising thousands of stakeholders.
- A similar feeling of communality and determination could be perceived in Paris on 12 December 2015. I felt it even right through the television screen. An international **climate community** had been born.
- If we cannot manage the mitigation of the global warming and if we do not realise the goals of the Paris agreement, we will just be wasting our time. As we say here: than we are mopping with the tap wide open i.e we will be fighting a running battle. We better don't.

Thank you for your attention.

- 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 -