

Greta Thunberg's speech to UN Sec Gen. Katowice. Dec 3, 2018

My name is Greta Thunberg. I am 15 years old. I am from Sweden.

I speak on behalf of Climate Justice Now.

Many people say that Sweden is just a small country and it doesn't matter what we do.

But I've learned you are never too small to make a difference. And if a few children can get headlines all over the world just by not going to school, then imagine what we could all do together if we really wanted to. But to do that, we have to speak clearly, no matter how uncomfortable that may be.

You only speak of green eternal economic growth because you are too scared of being unpopular. You only talk about moving forward with the same bad ideas that got us into this mess, even when the only sensible thing to do is pull the emergency brake.

You are not mature enough to tell it like is. Even that burden you leave to us children. But I don't care about being popular. I care about climate justice and the living planet.

For 25 years countless of people have stood in front of the United Nations climate conferences, asking our nation's leaders to stop the emissions. But, clearly, this has not worked since the emissions just continue to rise.

So I will not ask them anything. Instead, I will ask the media to start treating the crisis as a crisis. Instead, I will ask the people around the world to realize that our political leaders have failed us. Because we are facing an existential threat and there is no time to continue down this road of madness.

Rich countries like Sweden need to start reducing emissions by at least 15% every year to reach the 2 degree warming target. You would think the media and everyone of our leaders would be talking about nothing else — but no one ever even mentions it. Nor does hardly anyone ever talk about that we are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction, with up to 200 species going extinct every single day.

Furthermore, does no one ever speak about the aspect of equity clearly stated everywhere in the Paris agreement, which is absolutely necessary to make it work on a global scale. That means that rich countries like mine need to get down to zero emissions, within 6–12 years with today's emission speed, so that people in poorer countries can heighten their standard of living by building some of the infrastructures that we have already built. Such as hospitals, electricity and clean drinking water.

Because how can we expect countries like India, Colombia or Nigeria to care about the climate crisis if we, who already have everything, don't care even a second about our actual commitments to the Paris agreement?

So when school started in August this year I sat myself down on the ground outside the Swedish parliament. I school striked for the climate. Some people say that I should be in

school instead. Some people say that I should study to become a climate scientist so that I can "solve the climate crisis". But the climate crisis has already been solved. We already have all the facts and solutions.

And why should I be studying for a future that soon may be no more, when no one is doing anything to save that future? And what is the point of learning facts when the most important facts clearly mean nothing to our society?

The year 2078, I will celebrate my 75th birthday. If I have children maybe they will spend that day with me. Maybe they will ask me about you. Maybe they will ask why you didn't do anything while there still was time to act.

You say you love your children above all else, and yet you are stealing their future in front of their very eyes.

Until you start focusing on what needs to be done rather than what is politically possible, there is no hope. We cannot solve a crisis without treating it as a crisis.

We need to keep the fossil fuels in the ground, and we need to focus on equity. And if solutions within the system are so impossible to find, maybe we should change the system itself.

We have not come here to beg world leaders to care. You have ignored us in the past and you will ignore us again.

We have run out of excuses and we are running out of time.

Today we use 100 million barrels of oil every single day. There are no politics to change that. There are no rules to keep that oil in the ground. So we can't save the world by playing by the rules. Because the rules have to be changed.

Our civilization is being sacrificed for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue making enormous amounts of money.

Our biosphere is being sacrificed so that rich people in countries like mine can live in luxury. It is the sufferings of the many which pay for the luxuries of the few.

So we have not come here to beg the world leaders to care for our future. They have ignored us in the past and they will ignore us again. We have come here to let them know that change is coming whether they like it or not. The people will rise to the challenge. And since our leaders are behaving like children, we will have to take the responsibility they should have taken long ago. END