

Honourable Mr. President,
Honoroube Secretary General,
dear Mayor Araujo Lacerda,
Mr. Lees,
distingushed delegates and guests,

it is not only a great pleasure for me to speak to you on behalf of ICLEI's FutureCityLeaders Initiative and my fellow delegates from New Zealand, Finland and the United States.

Moreover, I am very grateful for the opportunity to address you on behalf of the younger generation.

Because, this time it is about our future and therefore, I would like to thank ICLEI and especially Konrad, Jeb, Monika, Mona and Ryan and all those supporting the FutureCityLeaders Programme for having the courage to invite us and to recognize the importance of involving the younger generation.

I mention younger generation instead of young generation. It is just because, we are the younger generation but not that young anymore.

We are grown up and can express our own thoughts pretty well. And we certainly understand what you are talking about but we would like to encourage you to listen to what we have to say.

You see,

This time we are here to challenge you, but also to inspire you.

And this time we are here to share our dream about the future we want and to look beyond what is currently accepted by you as the elder generation.

It is right, we are the new generation you are talking about so much, but what do you expect from us?

Just to say "Make some noise" as the UN-Secretary General Ban Ki-moon previously requested, seems a bit poor, don't you agree?

Answering then "you are the future!"

Well right, but does this excuse you from your responsibility?

Don't you think, we all have to fight the youth's battle for a benefit of a better world?

Monika, you once asked me, don't you fear the future?

Yes, I do. Listen to the obvious facts of today, Martin Lees mentioned earlier, yes I fear.

However, not the future, but the present time.

We all know, this time is a very critical time and you all know it because you have been talking about this since years, so my question is, what do you do on Pay Day?

You as leaders in office are so focused on talking about political, economic and financial issues that you are failing to act on the crucial points which will determine our future.

We all know this is not due to a lack of capacities or resources, or of available solutions.

As Jeremy Rifkin, the famous US economist, pointed out clearly at the 1st International convention of environmental laureates last March in Freiburg:

„the problem is that there is a lack of political will towards fundamental change of our global economic and social system.“

This is disappointing and a shame for all governments be it national or local.

My generation sees a desperate need for action but has no trust in you as our leaders to establish a framework for solutions.

What I fear is the incapability of the today's decision makers and the challenges we as the younger generation have to handle with.

Therefore my generation stresses the urgency of an ambitious plan and demands real progress, because we can't wait for another Rio + 30.

When I arrived at Rio de Janeiro, a couple of days ago and had my first breakfast at the roof of my hostel, there were more than 5 airplanes departing and flying over my head within no more than 10 minutes.

So I thought of my speech and wondered, is this the world I want to live in?

Where an airplane departs every two minutes producing an average of 8000 Carbon-Emissions.

Where land abuse became normal due to our demands of consumption?
And where Cities face transportation problems and clashes of
generations?

Is this the world we want to live in, where people who can afford it, live
on the costs of the next generations?

If you don't solve those very simple problems today, my generation will
struggle retaining climate and biodiversity tomorrow.

But why should it only be our burden to think of the life-cycle costs of
every major decision we take?

Why will it be only us who are asked to take the responsibility for the
future and to carry out the consequences of today's decisions?

We are exhausted of the inefficient, wasteful, environmental and socially
unsustainable exploitation of our resources.

And therefore, we demand real action now!

Sadly enough, after internationally expressed goals by the United
Nations, hundreds of good will memorandums of politicians in charge
and millions of statements of head of states, there are no steps taken to
improve the situation known already twenty years ago.

It was even written in the Financial Times just a few days ago, that two
weeks before the Rio+ 20 Conference will be held in Rio, the United
Nations publicly admits that the world's ecological balance is utterly

devastating and that the Nation States have mostly failed to reach the international agreements on environmental goals.

But on this ICLEI World Congress we, as the younger generation, want to see a commitment to decisions taken for a sustainable future on local level with clear timelines and means of financing these commitments. Because if you as the generation in charge continue like this, you are responsible for the damage you cause to my generation and the generations to come, for us not having the choice on which planet to live.

And if we all continue like this, the existence of our planet is in danger. But there is no planet B.

So what are your visions of our world?

Why do you hesitate?

What impedes your actions?

According to Jeremy Rifkin we need a million Cities like Freiburg in the future to come forward with a fundamental change.

As a City Councilor of the City of Freiburg, I can tell you, this is not an easy task to do.

And I am totally aware of the challenge we as City representatives face.

But on behalf of my fellow colleagues and all the FutureCityLeaders to come, I stress the importance that this project needs to be tackled and sorted out now.

So, is it your responsibility?

Yes it is. The matters are in your hand.

You need imagination, you need to think out-of-the-box and you need the younger generation for that.

Because the future, my generation wants, is a future of peace, food security, social justice, human rights for all and economic prosperity where everyone can lead a free and worthwhile life.

Because we want to live in a world where our cultures, livelihoods, homelands and identities are no longer under threat.

A future balanced on environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability.

Distinguished colleagues,

We only share this one planet so we must find shared solutions.

This is our common responsibility.

So Let' s get moving now!

Thank you!