

The Sonderborg Declaration on Decisive Climate Action to be Taken by COP21 in Paris

The latest results of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in its Fifth Assessment Report in 2013 and 2014, which have been agreed upon by all governments of the world, show that:

- Global climate change is accelerating and human influence is the cause.
- Dangerous and irreversible effects of global warming are growing exponentially and will effect all parts of the world.
- Decisive and immediate action at all levels is required to secure the globally agreed target of limiting global warming to less than 2°C.

By 2050 more than 70% of the world population will live in cities, causing by far the largest share of global green house gas emissions. Cities of the world are key, along with nations and regions, to find a solution to this challenge. Cities have a responsibility, as well as an opportunity, to make a considerable contribution.

The participants of the Sonderborg conference on 100% Climate Neutrality call upon the governments of the world meeting at COP21 in Paris to take decisive action. Many practical examples of cities and rural communities (e.g. Sonderborg (DK), Flensburg (GER) and Copenhagen (DK)) show that it is possible to achieve 100% climate neutrality as early as 2025, if cities take decisive action and organize strong citizen participation.

Education and learning is crucial to create the necessary citizen participation. In Sonderborg this approach has shown to lead to job creation and significant improvements in energy efficiency, complemented by renewable energy sources. The impact on community has been significant. Having reached a 30% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions since 2007, Sonderborg serves as a powerful, scalable role model.

In our region we demonstrate it is doable. We urge COP21 to draw heavily upon the possible contribution of all cities and local communities of the world to strengthen the role of local action in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

This declaration has been negotiated and unanimously accepted by all participants of the Sonderborg conference on 100% Climate Neutrality on October 7th 2015. The conference has been organized as a joint effort of the universities, the cities Sonderborg and Flensburg, local climate protection projects and businesses.