



Keynote Speech by Do-Hyun Kim

We need your answer and immediate action.

Hello, I am Do-Hyun Kim. I am in my first year in high school and involved in youth climate action.

Over the past few months, young students around the world including myself have raised our voice about the need to act in reaction to the climate emergency. We are desperate. We were complimented on what we are trying to do; that what we are doing is amazing given our young age; and, that we represent hope. I am standing here today to demand action in response to our call. I am not one of 'well-behaved students' today, but representing the future generation: victims of the climate crisis.

Climate change has hit the young generation the hardest. Things you did not experience in your childhood have become an everyday occurrence for us. Things you took for granted have become things of the past. Every summer we repeatedly have to suffer suffocating heatwave and sleepless tropical nights. Every spring, when we go to school, we have to wear masks as the air is polluted with fine dust. We used to hear that Korea has four distinct seasons, but I do not feel that way anymore.

Worse than what we have to bear physically is the fear that climate change might take our future away. My friend who wants to become a biologist studying coral reef may have to change her dream as there may not be any more coral reefs left for her to study because of climate change. We can study hard and plan our future, but our dreams can be stolen by climate change.

Climate change is, of course, not something we choose. It was already happening before I was born. The irresponsible choice you have made in the past borrowing on the security of our future have created this climate crisis.

You tell us that you understand. But do you really? You tell us that coal-powered plants are the culprits of climate change. Then why do we keep building new coal power plants and authorising their overseas export? Renewable energy makes up only 3% of power mix in Korea; how can you tell us that you faithfully comply with the Paris Agreement? I do not want to hear any excuses. We all have to drastically change our behaviour. All countries need to cut down on coal and increase the use of renewable energy.

I have been involved in Fridays for Futures three times so far with my friends. We visited Ministry of Education, Ministry of Environment and the Presidential House to deliver our message. It was never easy to miss the school and take to the street. Yet we felt that this was the least we could do to make any change, and so we decided to act.

I am saying to you all who are present. You have to see why young people are out on the street. It's nothing to do with our age but what we are asking for. Minister Yun. I do not want to feel ashamed that I am a Korean citizen that is deteriorating our climate. Please answer our call and make Korea a country that we can be proud of and one that is leading change. Please respond to our call and take action immediately.
Thank you.