

# Klima-, Energi- og Bygningsminister Martin Lidegaards tale til seminaret "In 100 y starting now"

04-11-2011

Dear friends

Thank you for inviting me here today.

Quite a lot has happened in my life since the last time I saw you.

But I want to assure you,  
that even though I have changed  
my profession, title and jackets.  
I haven't changed my sincere belief in the green transformation.  
My fears, my dreams and my hopes.

This project is trying to look 100 years ahead.

Let's try to look 100 years back.

100 years ago the Chinese Revolution overthrew China's last imperial dynasty and established the Republic of China.

Today China has gone from being the world's sweat shop to being a world power.

50 years ago the American military developed the first technology now known as the internet.

Today the World Wide Web has forever revolutionized the speed and means of communication.

10 years ago the Twin Towers collapsed in a terrorist attack defining the last decade as a decade of fear.

Today the war on terror is hopefully coming to an end, and we can start an era of hope.

Middle

These historic events clearly illustrate how difficult it is to predict the future.

As the famous Danish philosopher,  
Soren Kierkegaard once put it:  
"Life can only be understood backwards,  
but must be lived forward"

In other words:

We don't know what's coming,  
but we can't just sit on our hands and wait for future enlightenment.

We must act now.

Even though we don't know all the consequences of our actions.

We have to act because the challenges we're facing are massive.

The last 100 years the planet has industrialized.

And its population has soared.

We have moved from horses to horsepower.

And we are emitting more greenhouse gas than ever before.

Concentrations of CO2 have grown by 40 % since pre-industrial times.

And energy demand has hit the roof.

These challenges forces us to change our way of producing, consuming and living.

But they also present us with a major opportunity.

An opportunity to change to the better.

An opportunity we must seek.

1. That's why the Danish government has decided to reduce the Danish emissions by 40% in 2020 compared to 1990.

2. Ensuring that half of the consumption of electricity will come from wind power in 2020 and turning the whole energy system into renewable energy by 2035.

We're not suggesting to go back to caves and campfires.

But we believe that tomorrow's winner strategy is doing more with less.

Frankly I'm tired of the typical knee jerk reaction,

that it can't be done.

It has to be done.  
Climate change isn't a question of sunbathing at the North Pole.  
It's a question of more storms, floods and hurricanes.  
A question of survival.  
Especially harmful to those who are most vulnerable.  
We have to pave a new way.  
A way forward with new cutting edge green technology and with new ways of leading our lives.  
But new energy policies can't do it alone.  
We need to be more creative than that.

Creating what Shakespeare called  
"the brightest heaven of invention".  
All of history's great transformations have involved politicians, citizens and businesses joining forces.  
Fortunately we are not at the beginning of this process.

We are in the middle of it.

1. We politicians need to walk the talk.  
To change the investment landscape,  
locking in low-carbon energy and infrastructure.

That means demonstrating,  
that we can build a thriving green economy here in Denmark and more widely in the world.  
And we need strong regulation and zero tolerance to companies that refuse to take full responsibility for their actions.

We need leaders who expand green stimulus elements, including energy efficiency, renewables and new smart electricity grids.  
And we need them to co-ordinate their efforts for rapid results.  
I can assure you this is the ambition of the new government.

2. Secondly we need to build public support and create ownership among citizens.  
It is a hard message to sell,  
but the tide is moving in our favour.

Think about it.  
The way people consume,  
live their lives and spend their money is in a wide extend beyond the power of politicians.  
But people's choices are inevitably political.  
And that's why we need to pull them towards us,  
to make them work with us.  
The centre you are going to create needs to address the civil society.

We politicians need to set the external regulation and framework and we need to define our common hope and ethical standards.  
But we cannot carry the internal transformation of citizens.  
That is why it is so important that this project and the new centre also address the challenge.

3. Finally we need bold and courageous companies investing in the future.  
Not just for the sake of others,  
but because it's the smartest business move to make.  
Tomorrow's winners will be the ones who are able to create green inexpensive solutions for the rapidly growing middleclass.

I dream of a world where ethical consumerism isn't a curse word.  
Where we combine the aesthetic, ethic and technical solutions.  
Where Corporate Social Responsibility is more than just talk.  
And where the human way of thinking and consuming have evolved to a more ethical state of mind.

Now, this is obviously not written in the government's policy bill.  
But I believe this is in spirit what you should work on and what we will work on.

A good friend of mine,  
a female former colonel in the Zimbabwean freedom army once told me:  
"Traveller, there are no paths.  
Paths are made by walking.  
Walk!"

The climate changes forces us to change the way we live and the way we walk.  
Let's embrace this opportunity and take the necessary steps to ensure a better world right now and in a  
100 years.

I stand for high ambition and high achievement.  
We must change our way of thinking and living,  
we must summon the courage to act  
and we must transform.

Thank you.