



Speech
by
the President of Iceland
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson
at
the Award Ceremony
Zayed Future Energy Prize
Abu Dhabi
17 January 2012

Your Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Your Excellencies
Dear friends

We celebrate here tonight a remarkable vision, rooted in the legacy of Sheikh Zayed, promoted by the leadership of Abu Dhabi, strengthened through the shared vision of people all over the world – innovators, campaigners, thinkers, entrepreneurs, citizens, young and old.

In the few years since its inauguration, the Zayed Future Energy Prize has become a landmark, a signpost on our common journey towards a sustainable future, to an era when the children of all generations can enjoy the wonders of nature, secure and safe in their homelands.

Just as Sheikh Zayed led the people of the desert to greener farmlands, bringing water to regions of drought, the modern message of Abu Dhabi is a call for a global transformation, for a future where power plants will no longer threaten the climate and energy brings health and prosperity to all; a message made effective by Masdar, the Summit, IRENA, and other initiatives.

This call to action by Abu Dhabi has been heard in faraway places, as is witnessed by the nominations for the prize: Over a thousand from more than seventy countries, examined and assessed by a trusted core of experts until finally the jury met in December for its final decision.

My fellow jury members have distinguished themselves in many fields, from academia to the arts, from public service to business success: the President of the Maldives battling rising sea levels which have already submerged some of his islands; the melting of the ice in my part of the world being the major culprit. A jury unique because no other has two Heads of State serving in the deliberations.

The winners tonight lead from the front, move the battleline closer to success, show how a global coalition is now emerging through lifetime achievements, public campaigns, corporate successes, innovation and visionary leadership.

We do not need any more lessons on the urgency to prevent irreversible climate change.

Now is the time for action. That is the distinction of the winners here tonight.

The Zayed Future Energy Prize thus brings a message of hope and a promise of a brighter future, examples of how, together, we can create a better world.