



Speech
by
the President of Iceland
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson
at
the Zayed Future Energy Prize
Award Ceremony

Abu Dhabi
20 January 2014

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

As we gather here tonight, our reflections dwell on the year which ended so recently. Like the one before it, it was rich in dramatic evidence of changing patterns in global weather.

Disasters, droughts and floods; on every continent the news was in abundance; beginning during the early weeks in China, where the destruction was unparalleled, and ending in the festive season, when an Arctic experience was brought to New York and other snow-covered American cities.

In Australia and in Europe - from Finland in the north to Portugal in the south; in Asia - from Bangladesh to the Philippines; everywhere, television reports brought us startling stories, showing that we have entered a new era and suggesting that Planet Earth may be out of control. Science, in the findings of multiple studies, brings the responsibility home to ourselves, to our actions and our economies.

Within this dramatic global playing field of increasingly extreme weather events, the Zayed Future Energy Prize carries the challenging vision that there is indeed an alternative way, that like Sheikh Zayed, who brought his people from the struggle with the desert onto the road to

development and prosperity, we can together make the future safe for our cities, our nations, our children.

Although the Prize is still young, it has already galvanized a broad community of innovators and entrepreneurs, farmers and industrialists, visionaries and activists, scientists and students, corporations and idealists, rich and poor, young and old.

In the few years since its foundation, nominations for the Prize have come from more than one hundred countries; a unique achievement showing the vast global constituency which the Prize is already engaging.

The process of selection is vigorous and elaborate, due to the variety and the excellence of the individual candidates. And once again we will witness how the honour which the Prize bestows is reflected far and wide.

I thank my fellow jury members and all who were engaged in the stages of selection, including the excellent staff of the Zayed Future Energy Prize, for their contribution to the results we celebrate tonight.

I also express to His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the leadership of this great and fascinating country how honoured we are in being of service to the legacy of Sheikh Zayed and Your vision of a safe and sustainable world.