Frans Timmermans' opening remarks at the Petersberg Climate Dialogue

Brussels, 28 April 2020

Ladies and Gentlemen thank you very much,

First of all, it is clear that all politicians of all levels will be asked by their citizens to get us out of this crisis, to make sure that we recover quickly from the COVID-crisis. We can do it in two ways. We can repeat what we did before and throw a lot of money to the old economy; or we can be smart and combine this with the necessity to move to a green economy.

I think this is a huge opportunity. In the European Union, we see the Green Deal as our growth strategy, with three things: the Green Deal, digitalization and increasing our resilience. This can all be part of a plan to reduce our emissions to zero by 2050. How can we speed this up? By sticking to the agenda as though a COP would take place in November this year. That means we will be ready with our 2030 target in September, duly assessed for impact. We will propose that to the co-legislators in the European Parliament and Council. This can then be translated in revised national plans by our Member States. The European Union will then be in a position in which we are ready for the next COP and to show leadership that could take us out of a situation of a deep economic crisis in a way that will increase our resilience and will allow us to translate the Green Deal into concrete measures.

We need quick results. That means that we need to identify those sectors of our economy that could quickly transit to a sustainable situation and at the same time create jobs and growth. You can think about the building area, you can think about transport, the energy sector. These are the plans we will be working on and I am really looking forward to work with our international partners. I want to especially refer to our special responsibility as Europeans for our sister continent which is Africa.

Thank you very much.