

# Protest against Climate Breakdown

## “Kick off Speech”

Wilmar Igl, 2019-03-02  
Forumtorget, Uppsala, Sweden

Good morning, Uppsala!

My **name** is Wilmar Igl. My apologies for addressing you in **English** now, but I thought that to overcome my public speaking anxiety, I should choose a language I am more familiar with than Swedish.

Regarding **myself**, I just want to let you know: I

- am not a biologist,
- I have never collected any insects and
- I am not an outdoorsy person, apart from weekends walks in the forest, mostly because my kids would drive me crazy if we would stay indoors all day .

Still I am here today to **talk** about, ... well, ... the weather, the climate, and ... what was the third again, I also tend to forget it .... oh, yes ... mass extinction.

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I assume that you are all well aware that have we entered the age of the **anthropocene**. Man-made changes to our biosphere have lead to an increase of greenhouse gases and the global surface temperature. In the past these changes were mostly discussed in scientific publications and mass media as distant events in the polar regions or on remote islands. However, over the last years climate change has come much closer in terms of weather extremes. **Examples** are unusually warm weather (like the last week), droughts, floods, and forest fires which all happened here in Sweden last year, but also on a much larger scale elsewhere in the world.

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I am here today to warn you that under **current policies** of rising greenhouse gas emissions, we will approach a temperature increase of 2.5 and 4.4 (mean: 3.3) degrees Celsius with a lifetime [0]. Any temperature increase above 2 degrees Celsius is expected to have catastrophic effects on human societies including climate extremes, which I already mentioned. In addition, we will see sea-level rises, which is likely to damage many coastal metropolitan regions, and a potential breakdown of the gulfstream, which will paradoxically provide Sweden with a colder climate.

Although within the laws of **physics** humankind can still prevent an increase of global temperature above two degrees celsius compared to pre-industrial levels, there are no **policies** in place or expected any time soon to limit such temperature rises.

To illustrate the epic failure of **international politics**, I would like to mention that 50% of all emissions from fossil fuels have been emitted over the last 25 years during which 24 global climate conferences were held. This means humans continued to emit greenhouse gases during a time when policy makers and large parts of the public were already well aware of the risks. In addition, last year's carbon dioxide emissions reached an all time high, which means the desperately needed reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is nowhere near in sight.

Even **Sweden** in his role as a global leader in climate action according to the Climate Change Performance Index [2], does not meet the target of limiting global temperature increase to less than 2 degrees. Again, 2 degrees increase of global temperature is considered a bare minimum to be able to somehow manage the catastrophic consequences of climate breakdown. In addition, Sweden is actual competing regarding its climate leadership with much poorer countries like Morocco, Lithuania, and Latvia. In my opinion, this indicates that climate action is more a question of political will than financial budget. However, budget is of course also an important factor. Therefore, it raises many doubts on how

serious Sweden is about its climate politics after the budget decisions in December 2018, which reduced the climate budget by 2 billion Swedish crowns.

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described climate breakdown “**as a direct and existential threat**” in October 2018.

He stated that we have to **bend the curve** of greenhouse gas emission downwards till 2020, ie next year, to avoid a tipping point of climate change, after which global warming will be reinforcing itself in a positive feedback loop. Therefore, you have every right to feel a sensation of panic since we are in the middle of a **climate breakdown emergency**.

Therefore, the best solution I can offer you is - to quote environmentalist Pär Holmgren - “**to do everything that is possible**” depending on your knowledge and skills and role in society. If you share my assessment of the situation, I would especially urge you to consider the following **proposals for climate action**:

1. **Read!** Get informed about the most important issue in human history!
2. **Talk!** Talk with your friends, relatives and colleagues about the climate crisis.
3. **Protest!** Participate in public protests demanding climate action!
4. **Donate!** Support climate action groups with donations!
5. **Lobby!** Contact your representative in the parliament and demand climate action!
6. **Vote!** Vote for parties actively supporting the Paris Agreement!
7. **Change!** Change social norms by changing your behaviour and show it to others.
  - 7.1. **Stop flying** using fossil fuels! If you have to fly, overcompensate the carbon emissions by a factor of at least two.
  - 7.2. **Stop driving** using fossil fuels! If you have to drive, overcompensate the carbon emissions by a factor of at least two.

7.3. **Reduce your fossil-fuel based consumption!** Buy less stuff! Any product you do not buy, is a present to future generations.

At present, consumption of earth resources of an average consumer in Sweden is 4 times higher than sustainable. In fact, according to a report of the IPCC greenhouse gas emissions which are currently around 10 tons per person and year, have to be reduced to 1 ton per person and year by 2050 to keep global warming at 1.5 degree Celsius.

7.4. **Follow a plant-based diet!** Avoid beef and milk products!

In **summary**,

1. Global climate is starting to break down.
2. Climate breakdown will have catastrophic effects within a lifetime.
3. Human action is the reason for climate breakdown.
4. Human action can still control climate breakdown.
5. Humans have to take urgent, large-scale, global climate action.
6. You as an individual have to take climate action because of political inaction!

Thank you!

[0] <https://climateactiontracker.org/publications/warming-projections-global-update-dec-2018/>

[1] <https://climateprotection.org/uninhabitable-earth-spotlights-3-climate-change-misunderstandings/>

[2] <https://www.climate-change-performance-index.org>