

**International Solidarity Conference on
Climate Change Strategies for
African and Mediterranean Regions**

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Introduction

Honourable Prime Minister, Ministers, delegates, guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to present this keynote address to you. This conference is timely indeed: the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) yesterday concluded the Synthesis Report on the latest climate change science in Valencia and we are a mere two weeks away from the United Nations' 13th Climate Change Conference to be held in Bali. Political momentum has been fuelled by the scientific findings and there is now wide recognition that action on climate change has never been more urgent.

The IPCC has clearly found that Africa will be one of the three regions worst affected by climate change impacts.

We are already seeing unusual floods and droughts, such as the recent floods throughout Africa, which destroyed more than 700,000 homes, claimed the lives of over 200 people, washed away precious infrastructure, livestock, and ultimately people's livelihoods.

The IPCC has also indicated that by 2020, between 75 and 250 million people in Africa are projected to be exposed to an increase of water stress due to climate change. If coupled with increased demand due to population growth, this will adversely affect livelihoods and exacerbate water-related problems.

Failure to act therefore makes it much harder to achieve the goal of the Desertification Convention and constitutes the main threat to then goals of the Biodiversity Convention.

Additionally, many tropical diseases are occurring in areas where they haven't occurred in the past. Malaria is already being found at altitudes where it didn't occur before.

Sea-level rise due to climate change is another major concern in Africa and is already showing effects in parts of the continent, including West Africa. African cities like Cotonou

or Alexandria - cities in poor countries least able to modify urban infrastructure, - are most at risk.

This makes it all the more shocking, that Africa is the 'forgotten' continent in the climate change process. African countries have not yet profited from the carbon market. The Adaptation Fund, funded from a levy on Clean Development Mechanism projects, will hopefully be operationalised at the Bali conference. However, many funds contain meagre sums, if you look at the magnitude of the problem.

We are on the eve of making our first moves into a new era of climate change abatement. This year is critical in terms of moving us toward the next phase of international negotiations. A strong multilateral framework needs agreed upon by 2009 to ensure that there is no gap after the end of the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period in 2012. A comprehensive package on the future needs to be launched at Bali, and the world cannot afford to leave Bali without such a decisive breakthrough.

Bali and the process beyond Bali represents an opportunity that cannot be missed to put Africa's concerns on the agenda.

The new multilateral framework must be based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Industrialised countries must continue to take the lead in emission reduction, but further engagement by developing countries will be required, especially by those whose emissions already, or will in the future, contribute significantly to atmospheric concentrations. Next to mitigation, enhanced action on adaptation, especially for those most affected, yet least able to cope, will have to be another key building block of a future climate change regime. Both adaptation and mitigation have to be enabled by the relevant large-scale deployment of technologies and a strong financial architecture. Technology and finance need to constitute the other two key building blocks of a future regime.

Africa's policy needs and concerns with respect to these four building blocks need to be adequately taken up in a future regime. Current efforts under the UN Climate Change Convention constitute a good basis on which to expand and build a future response.

The UN Climate Change Convention provides for a variety of support mechanisms for adaptation in developing countries.

These measures include the provision of funding, technology transfer, as well as scientific and technical assistance for all Parties to enhance their knowledge base.

National Adaptation Programmes of Action are currently an option for Least Developed Countries and provide a rigorous assessment of urgent adaptation needs in LDCs. They aim to expand the coping range of communities.

The Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change has the objective of assisting all countries in understanding and assessing impacts,

vulnerability and adaptation, to enable informed decision-making on practical adaptation actions.

Many countries are starting to take concrete action towards adaptation to future climate change. This needs to be significantly expanded and integrated into national and sectoral planning to ensure that sustainable development and adaptation are mutually enhanced.

To be successful, adaptation should be implemented in the context of national and sustainable development priorities and be an integral part of national and sectoral development plans.

A number of steps may be necessary at the national level to initiate an effective implementation strategy for adaptation, including:

- enhancement of the scientific basis for decision making;
- education, training and public awareness on adaptation, including for young people;
- technology development and transfer
- promotion of local coping strategies.

Mobilising resources for sustained, sufficient and predictable funding for the implementation of large-scale adaptation initiatives remains a challenge.

Yet without such targeted funding, adaptation runs the risk of not being effectively addressed and funding may be largely limited to “reactive” funding, e.g. short-term emergency relief, which would be unsupportive of sustainable development approaches and very costly.

Estimated overall additional investment and financial flows needed for adaptation in 2030 amount to several tens of billions of United States dollars.

The special funds currently available for adaptation need to be fully utilized. Many developing countries need capacity building to help increase awareness for the different requirements and modalities of the different funds.

Additional funding will also become available through the Adaptation Fund under the Kyoto Protocol. Part of the fund will come from a levy on proceeds from the Protocol’s Clean Development Mechanism.

However, the current Convention mechanisms and sources of financing, all managed by the GEF, are clearly insufficient and new sources of funding will be required. Additional funding will be needed in particular for sectors and countries that are already highly dependent on external support. Such funding needs to be facilitated under a future climate change regime post-2012, rather than asking for commitments under the Convention, while putting funding outside it according to donor rules.

Strengthened multilateral action on adaptation needs to be a key building block under a future climate change regime

Mitigation is important for the future development paths of developing countries

A future response to climate change needs to entail industrialised countries going well beyond present emission reduction efforts, given their historic responsibility and their economic capabilities. Further engagement by developing countries need not entail such stringent measures.

Many developing countries are already taking voluntary mitigation action. But given the urgent need to reduce emissions globally, more such action is needed. For developing countries, a pledge and review process may be one way forward. Further engagement by developing countries needs to be underpinned by synergies between sustainable development, climate and energy goals. Developing countries need incentives to limit emissions with green investment being channelled into the rapidly growing economies. The carbon market already provides important incentives for this.

A successful response to climate change that involves developing countries in a meaningful way must involve three points:

1. Be based on sustainable development pathways that mitigate and reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts.
2. Inclusively involve all developing countries to open up the opportunity to enhance sustainable development on a broad scale.
3. Respect the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities.

Developing countries need assistance to leapfrog the CO₂-intensive stage of development that industrialized countries entered into, to avoid costly transitions at a later stage.

Under the current climate change regime, an example of assistance to leapfrog the CO₂ intensive stage of economic development is the CDM. Although the CDM is not designed to change the overall direction of economic growth in developing countries, it does provide a vehicle to finance sustainable development projects, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries.

The Nairobi Framework, initiated by then Secretary General Kofi Anan and adopted in 2006, aims to help developing countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, to improve their level of participation in the CDM and enhance the CDM's geographical scope.

Bali must ensure that the first steps in crafting an international response to climate change, that is commensurate with the IPCC's scientific findings, are taken.

Bali must also ensure that developing country policy needs are adequately taken up in the climate change process for all four building blocks of a future regime.

This is strategically important, not only to green economic growth in developing countries and to ensure action on adaptation, but also to put the world on a permanent sustainable development path.

This conference represents a unique opportunity to ensure that African interests are safeguarded in the post-Bali negotiating agenda. Bali will set the negotiating train in motion and Africa cannot afford to let it leave the station without being on board.

Thank you

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