



**Opening of the Accra Climate Change Talks 2008  
Accra, 21 August 2008**

**Statement by Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary  
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

His Excellency, Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies and dignitaries  
Ladies and gentlemen

Our sincere appreciation goes to the Government of Ghana for hosting these important Climate Change Talks. And our sincere thanks go to the Government of Norway for funding the meeting.

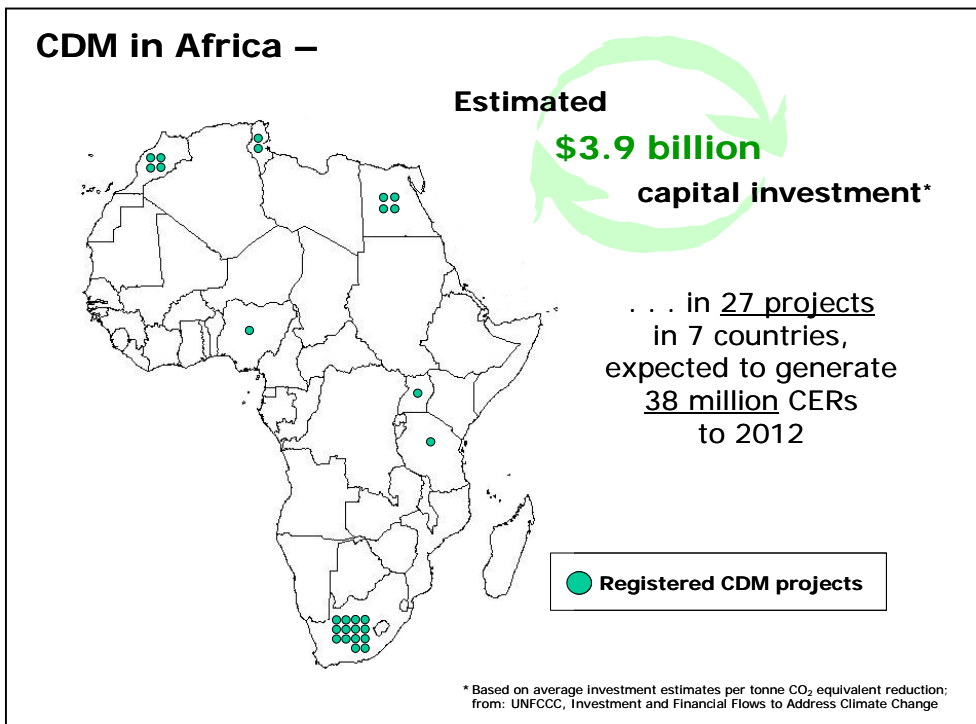
It is indeed good to be back in Africa again! Africa dazzles us with its friendliness, hospitality and natural beauty. But it is also one of the continents worst affected by climate change.

In Ghana, for example, up to 1,000 square kilometres of land may be lost in the Volta Delta owing to sea-level rise and inundation. Rainfall has decreased by 20% over the past 30 years. By 2020, as many as 250 million Africans could be exposed to increased water stress. Adaptation assistance and sustainable development are critical for this continent.

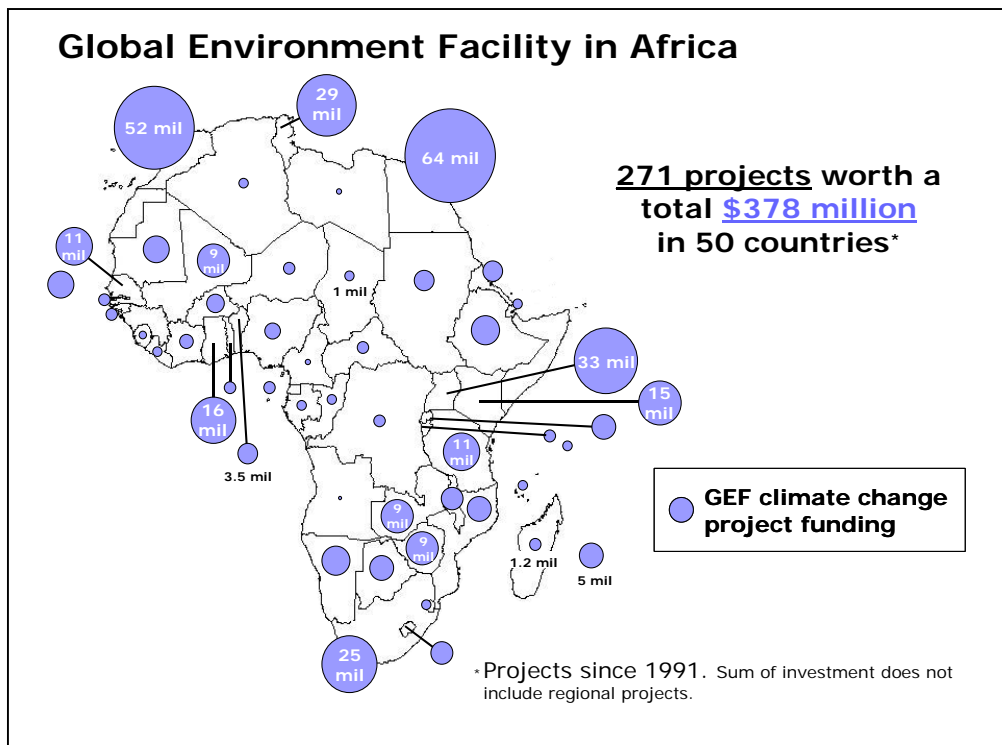
As reflected by the adoption of the Bali Road Map, you, the Parties, are committed to an ambitious outcome in Copenhagen, resulting in real emission reductions and reliable and effective support mechanisms.

The Accra Climate Change Talks 2008 present you with an important opportunity to pay close attention to the problems that confront Africa. Many African negotiators have expressed concern that the current regime delivers few real benefits.

A quick look at the number of projects under the clean development mechanism that are being implemented in Africa, would seem to bear this out.



The total value of projects in Africa funded by the Global Environment Facility over the past 17 years is 378 million dollars. To put this in perspective, the total value of projects worldwide is more than 2.4 billion dollars. These numbers also seem to reflect a similar lack of benefits for the continent.



Additionally, African countries express concern that with few emissions to reduce, they will also lose out under a future regime.

Whether this remains so or not is entirely in your hands. If this meeting can be a step towards the design of a regime that helps Africa to achieve clean economic growth and deal with the impacts of climate change through effective mechanisms that deliver on finance, technology and capacity-building, you will have done very important work here. If this fails, Africa will continue to be the climate change regime's forgotten continent - and climate change impacts will keep countries locked in the poverty trap.

The Accra Climate Change Talks are an important milestone in the negotiations under the Bali Road Map: there is little time left to get a solid negotiating text on the table. The talks are also the last meeting before Poznan. There is still much work to be done on all fronts. Clearly, the clock is ticking!

The work of the AWG-LCA needs to be driven forward by concrete proposals for solutions from all Governments. This will give real substance to the negotiations. And it is the only way that you will be able to thrash out text for inclusion in an agreed outcome in Copenhagen.

According to the timetable agreed to in Bali, the AWG-KP needs to conclude on the means for emission reductions and possible ways to enhance their effectiveness and contribution to sustainable development. Agreement on these tools will give the process much needed clarity. Agreement here will be a key landmark on the road to Copenhagen.

With the adoption of the Bali Road Map, you committed yourselves to building a bridge to a climate-resilient future. As an Ashanti proverb says, "People in a burning house cannot afford to lose time in an argument". The goal of a climate-resilient future can only be reached in a spirit of true cooperation. I urge Parties to cooperate and to make real progress on the issues before you.

Lastly, there is some good news on the funding of participation from the Trust Fund: thanks to the generosity of the donors, it has been possible to work out a package which allows financial support to be extended to two participants from all eligible Parties for Poznan. The package will also enable the participation of two delegates from small island developing States and least developed countries for the next two rounds of meetings of the AWGs in 2009.

With this package, and depending on contributions, the prospects look positive that a record number of delegates may be funded for participation at Copenhagen.

In closing: the sum of what is achieved in this process - now, up to and in Copenhagen - will, to a large degree, determine the wellbeing of all people on this planet, well into the future. In this light, next to cooperation, I wish you ambition.

Thank you

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