



**Climate Change Symposium by Japan Institute of International Affairs
Tokyo, 2 March 2011**

**Address by Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

State Secretary of Foreign Affairs Mr. Yutaka Banno,
Ambassador Yoshiji Nogami,
Ambassador Kenji Hiramatsu,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

I would like to thank the Government of Japan for their kind invitation to this beautiful country, and to the Japan Institute of International Affairs for the opportunity to address this distinguished Climate Change Symposium. You have asked me to review the outcomes of COP 16/CMP 6 and share my sense of COP 17/CMP 7.

I have called the Cancun Agreements a big step for the community of nations, but a small step for the planet. Under the exemplary leadership of Minister Patricia Espinoza, the Agreements are a big step for three main reasons:

First, the Cancun Agreements represent the most far-reaching collective effort the world has witnessed to reduce carbon emissions and to build a system holding all countries accountable to each other for those emission reductions.

All industrialised nations have made their economy wide reduction pledges official and have committed themselves to develop low-carbon development plans or strategies. Thirty-seven developing countries, including all large developing countries, have made formal their nationally-appropriate mitigation actions, or NAMAs, focusing on a deviation from business-as-usual emissions by 2020, and are encouraged to develop low-carbon growth strategies. Never before have all major emitters put forth their emission reduction plans under one agreement, and the sum total of reductions goes well beyond that of the Kyoto Protocol.

Second, the agreements represent the broadest package we have ever had to support developing countries, by creating new institutions to boost technology cooperation, financing and adaptation. A technology mechanism will be fully operational in 2012 and will support the innovation, development and spread of new technologies. A Green Climate Fund will provide long-term financing to projects, programmes, policies and other activities in developing countries through thematic funding windows. An adaptation framework will facilitate enhanced action on adaptation.

Third, Cancun gave the strongest signal governments have ever sent to the private sector that the future of economies WILL be low-carbon, by committing to a maximum temperature rise of 2 degrees Celsius, with a review towards 1.5 degrees Celsius in the near future.

For these three reasons, the Agreements form a solid foundation for scaled-up climate change action. However, for all its achievements, Cancun is only a small step for the planet because it did not yet put the world on a safe path. No agreement was reached on the year in which global emissions need to peak, although science tells us a global peaking in 2015 and a 50 percent reduction compared to 2000 levels by 2050 is needed to achieve a 2C limit. And, the level of ambition currently on the table amounts to only 60 percent of what is needed to limit the temperature increase to the agreed 2-degrees. On top of that, a 2-degree increase is, in fact, no guarantee for the survival of small island states or for water security in Sub Saharan Africa. So much work still remains.

The Cancun agreements take a bottom-up approach to mitigation, by encouraging all countries to pledge their best effort. That is a very good first step but it is unlikely to be enough to keep to 2-degrees, so we may need a top-down international agreement to complement the bottom up approach. In that context, in Durban, Governments will have to address the legal framework under which they will enhance their mitigation efforts.

Last year in Cancun, countries agreed to indicate a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol. Most countries want the Protocol to continue into a second commitment period. As we have just heard from State Secretary Banno, Japan has stated that it will not participate in the second commitment period. Some countries are of the view that certain key elements of the Protocol should continue to be upheld and be integrated into any further mitigation agreements. These key elements include predictability, the rules based approach and the compliance system, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and the flexibility mechanisms.

Ultimately, governments need to decide on this at the next UN Climate Change Conference in Durban, especially in view of avoiding a regulatory gap. Therefore Durban needs to build on Cancun, not only by adopting the new institutions, but also in terms of increasing the certainty of the international framework, and the Kyoto Protocol is rich with experience that we can learn from.

Ladies and gentlemen, since we are in Japan, let me also specifically address Japan's 25% target. It is an ambitious target, a target that shows clear leadership - but it was possibly easier set than followed through. Nonetheless, I urge Japan to stick to it, not least because it is testimony to the new direction that economic growth in Japan is set to take.

The target is premised on participation by all large emitters in a global climate change regime. Let us remember that industrialized countries have 100 years of historical responsibility due to the cumulative emissions caused by their industrialization, and that some developing countries are only now coming up to high levels of annual emissions. Evenso, under Cancun Agreements, all large emitters have pledged to control their emissions. In the context of participation by all large current emitters, Japan's 25% target is testimony to clear, strategic economic thinking which will create economic advantages well into the future.

Next to the target, Japan's New Growth Strategy will clearly put Japan on a cutting-edge path to low-carbon growth. And this is where the -25% target and the new economic strategy complement each other.

Japan is synonymous with technological innovation. Japan is a trendsetter. From fashion and music to motor vehicles, energy efficiency and clean energy technology, Japan holds the world fascinated. Japan, China and the U.S. are the top three ranked countries in terms of research and development for innovation.

And it is precisely technology, innovation and the development of low-carbon energy sources that form the key to fighting climate change while pursuing national growth. Because of its high potential to export cutting edge front runner technologies, Japan stands to gain in economic competitiveness when it comes to energy, industry and environment—particularly in a carbon-constrained world.

Furthermore, an ambitious target and low-carbon economic growth will move Japan towards increased energy security, especially in financial terms. To illustrate, if oil prices average \$100 a barrel and the various crises in the Middle East have put us well beyond that, Japan spends 3 per cent of its GDP on oil imports alone, not including increased production costs and potentially decreased profits. Moving forward, Japan needs to examine clean energies and increased energy efficiency.

Around the world, the new paradigm is low-carbon growth. Japan is already considering a host of domestic measures. With the appropriate strategies in place, Japan can take a leadership role in this trend.

Let me conclude by urging all Governments to build on the Cancun Agreements throughout 2011 with a view toward both adopting the new institutional arrangements, as well as increasing the certainty of the international regime in Durban.

We are at a crucial point in the evolution of international efforts to address climate change. We are also at an exciting point. We are moving from heavy reliance on a finite resource, owned by a few, to a better mix of harnessing the only infinitely-available energy sources on earth via cutting edge technologies.

That energy revolution has begun, and all stand to gain by accelerating a process that will bring greater energy stability, increased food and water security, and enhanced economic growth.

Thank you.
