



**Eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 18)
and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties
serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 8)
Doha, 26 November 2012**

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

H.E. Mr. Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, President of COP 18/CMP 8
H.E. Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, President of COP 17/CMP 7
Honorable representatives of the government of Qatar,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you all to the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. “السلام عليكم”.

My sincere thanks go to the COP President, as well as to the Qatar Foundation, for the tireless, detailed and thorough preparations made by their respective teams for an effective and efficient conference. My thanks also go to the people of the State of Qatar for so warmly receiving us. We are delighted to be here. “يسعدنا أن نكون هنا بينكم”.

For some of you, this is your first COP, and I welcome you to an experience I know you will never forget. Most of you have participated in enough COPs to know that each COP is unique, and this is no exception.

The Doha COP is evidently unique in its geopolitical location. This is the first time the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention is being held in the Gulf region.

On this historic occasion, the Gulf region has an unequalled world stage to showcase the contributions being made to reduce the Gulf’s food and water vulnerabilities, to put regional energy growth on a more sustainable path, and to build a safer, stronger, and more resilient energy future for all countries.

In addition to being a COP in the Gulf region, the Doha COP is, at the same time, an Asia-Pacific COP. This conference is unique in the way it will usher in major milestones for processes launched in two previous Asian COPs, namely Kyoto and Bali.

Under your guidance, and with important input from the subsidiary bodies, CMP 8 will mark the closure of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and launch the Protocol into its next period of implementation.

Under your guidance, and with important input from the subsidiary bodies, COP18 will move the Bali Action Plan from plan to action, from design to the full and effective implementation that expedites urgent response to climate change and enables much needed financial assistance and technical support for developing countries, while clarifying the path forward on important pending issues.

The Doha COP also presents a unique challenge – to look at both the present and the future under the Durban Platform:

- The present ways that ambition can be raised with necessary urgency; and
- The future framework that will be applicable to all in a way that both ensures equity and responds to the science.

Finally, my friends, the Doha COP is poised to be unique in the timing of its delivery. The draft documents before you are not final, but they are familiar. Due to much hard work on your part, the documents are mature enough for you to focus now on finding the common ground that allows them to be finalized in an open, transparent and inclusive manner.

May I dare say that under your guidance, much of this can be accomplished before the high-level segment, allowing this COP to finish not on Saturday, not on Sunday – but actually make history by finishing on Friday!

Thank you all. “شكرا والسلام عليكم”.
