



**Opening of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 13)  
Bali, 3 December 2007**

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

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Let me start by thanking the Indonesian Government and especially PA Rachmat for all their special efforts and hard work. You have organized what is one of the largest COPs to date, with efficiency, dedication and friendliness. The streets of Bali have been decorated with flags or “umbul-umbul”, as they are called here. I have been told that these are symbols of celebration.

You have welcomed us to one of the most beautiful places on our planet: a picture-perfect paradise, but an island that is also highly vulnerable to climate change impacts.

The outcome of this conference will, to a degree, determine whether Bali - and other vulnerable places - are destined to become a lost paradise, or not. If the outcome of this conference keeps pace with the many positive political signals of the past year, we are on a good road to preventing a lost paradise.

2. 2007 could well be termed an incredible year for climate change.

- It started with the EU adopting a 20% or 30% reduction target for 2020, depending on action by others;
- It continued with major developing countries like China adopting national climate change strategies;
- In 2007 all major summits adopted policy positions on climate change, starting with the G-8 and including APEC, ASEAN, and the Commonwealth;
- In 2007 the United States launched meetings of the major economies aimed at contributing, by the end of 2008, to the UNFCCC process;
- Above all, 2007 was the year of the IPCC, whose Fourth Assessment Report was applauded at every stage of finalization and crowned by the Nobel Peace Prize;
- 2007 culminated in a call from more than 80 heads of state or government at the high-level event of the Secretary-General, for a breakthrough in Bali.

The past year has helped people around the world understand that nobody can hide from climate change impacts. All will be affected, the poorest of the poor most in every case.

Public expectations for Bali to provide answers are big. The eyes of the world are now upon you. There is a huge responsibility for Bali to deliver.

3. Clearly, you have delivered in the past. The Convention is one of the most comprehensive international frameworks that today is as relevant as it was in Rio 15 years ago:

- it respects the reality of common but differentiated responsibilities;
- it sets out obligations for all nations;
- it lays the foundation for action on adaptation;
- it provides a long term goal to measure progress.

Within the Convention framework, the Kyoto Protocol has established a unique architecture to build upon. Many of the foundations for action now are in place. The infrastructure is ready and functioning:

- with assigned amounts established and reviewed;
- with the electronic infrastructure for emissions trading operational; and
- with joint implementation and the clean development mechanism delivering results.

Let me quote one of my favourite sentences from the IPCC report: “There is high agreement and much evidence that notable achievements of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol are the establishment of a global response to climate change, stimulation of an array of national policies, and the creation of an international carbon market and new institutional mechanisms that may provide the foundation for future mitigation efforts.”

4. The world expects a quantum leap forward. Of course, you can only leap from solid ground. You can create that ground by agreeing on many important and urgent decisions already before Ministers arrive. This includes:

- Agreeing on practical adaptation actions based on work under decision 1/CP.10;
- Agreeing on the framework for the Adaptation Fund so that it can start funding real adaptation projects;
- Agreeing on the framework for technology cooperation for the next few years to facilitate access by developing countries to the technologies needed;
- Agreeing on the initial phase of actions to reduce emissions from deforestation in developing countries; and
- Agreeing on further work to support adaptation action in the LDCs, to support national communications by non-Annex I Parties, and to enhance capacity-building and activities to raise public awareness.

It is time to move into implementation on these issues.

5. Shaping the future may seem like the impossible task of squaring a circle of conflicting interests. I firmly believe it can be done, if we can point the way on how we will turn four corners:

1) Leadership by industrialised countries must continue. It needs to be driven by the recognition that an entirely new energy future must underpin strong and sustainable growth.

More of the same will only prolong conventional technologies' grip on the world. We can no longer afford that to happen!

2) Bold action in the North can fuel clean growth in the South. Without cooperation, technology and incentives, developing countries have little choice but to make the same mistakes that were made in rich countries. Building on our CDM experience, can help change course. A course that will not only safeguard clean growth, but also represent huge investment opportunities.

3) Fossil fuels are here to stay and will continue to be the drivers of growth. It is a collective responsibility to use these fossil fuels without destroying our environment. Let us not cut off our nose to spite our face by refusing to explore the technologies that can help us to achieve this.

4) Adaptation is a reality for all countries. Some countries, like my own, can afford to pay their way out of the problem. But many cannot. Adaptation needs to be a priority on our agenda. We have to create a comprehensive framework that allows all countries to adapt. Here again, the CDM has shown us that levies on market mechanisms can bring us to what I have called a "self-financing climate compact".

6. All beginnings are difficult. But we can find the way if we focus on creating opportunities rather than being paralysed by threats. Determining the right order for discussions represents a huge challenge. I suggest to let form follow function: first turn attention to what can be done given the right tools. After this, focus on the type of instrument to house the outcome. The legal form, to my mind is a question to be answered at the end of a process, not at the beginning. After all, a marriage contract is the culmination of a love affair, not the topic of discussion on the first date.

In finding the right way forward we can learn from the last two years that dialogue, especially on a topic as complicated as this one, is critical to sound negotiations. I make no secret of the fact that I fervently hope you will make a breakthrough here in Bali through the formal adoption of a negotiating agenda.

I know you can rise to the challenge scientists and world leaders have put before you. The task you face is huge. But in the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity. Your secretariat stands ready to assist and support you in every way it can.

I wish you vision, I wish you compassion and I wish you wisdom.

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