



**Sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties and the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol
Cancun, 7 December 2010**

**Statement at the high-level segment by Christiana Figueres,
Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Su Excelencia, Presidente Calderón,
Honourable Presidents and Heads of State who are gracing this gathering with their presence,
Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. BAN Ki-moon,
Su Excelencia, Secretaria Espinosa,
Distinguished Ministers, Ambassadors, Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen, Señoras y Señores,

Quiero darles una calurosa bienvenida a COP16 y CMP 6 en este espectacular Cancún. Nuevamente agradezco al Sr. Presidente Calderón, a la Canciller Espinosa, al Secretario Elvira, y todos los miembros de sus equipos por su tesonera dedicación a este proceso, y por la manera tan transparente e inclusiva en que han conducido estas deliberaciones.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The beauty of the surroundings in which we are working cannot hide the fact that the stakes at this particular conference are very high. The political stakes are high because the effectiveness and credibility of your multilateral intergovernmental process are in danger. And the environmental stakes are high because we are quickly running out of time to safeguard our future.

When it comes to measuring our actions in life, we can never afford to assess them with respect to their impacts on the most privileged; rather we should honestly assess them with respect to their effect on those who are most vulnerable to our actions.

In the arena of climate change, the list of vulnerable nations is long, and growing.

Tuvalu, Maldives, Kiribati, Vanuatu are looking for ways to evacuate their entire population because of salt water intrusion and rising sea levels. Sooner rather than later, island nations will have to seek refuge in other, higher lying countries.

Their fate is a wake-up call to all of us:

- The floods that devastated Pakistan, Venezuela and Colombia this year are a wake-up call.
- The wildfires that gripped Russia are a wake-up call.
- This year's hottest summers to date in Japan and China are a wake-up call.
- There will be worse impacts, and no country will be exempt.

The question is: has the world woken up and can the world respond to this? The answer, my friends, is in your hands here and now.

In my opening speech last Monday, I mentioned that we are in the land of the ancient Mayan goddess Ixchel, goddess of reason, creativity and weaving. Over the past week, I have found it encouraging to see that she has inspired you to use reason and creativity to weave together some of the elements of your response to climate change. Much good work has already come out of the draft decisions you have prepared under both the SBI and the SBSTA. You have also used creativity and reason to begin to fill in some of the holes in the tapestry of the KP and the LCA. But we all know that is not enough.

You have come to a crucial stage in your work. You are now at the juncture at which you need to prove that the governments of the world are indeed ready to respond.

A solid response to climate change demands nothing less than putting international climate policy firmly back on track. You can only do that by moving beyond the boundaries of short-term national interests to converge in that space which is common to all of us, that space where we are all human beings dependent on the well-being of this now fragile planet, and where we are all jointly accountable to future generations. And you can reach that space only through conciliation with each other now.

Your task over the next very brief three days is to reach conciliation in a balanced manner on all outstanding elements of the Bali Road Map, including:

- Conciliation on the future of the Kyoto Protocol, and its mechanisms and on avoiding a gap beyond 2012;
- Conciliation on how and where to anchor mitigation proposals that have been put forward this year;
- Conciliation on the accountability for the implementation of mitigation proposals and the accompanying financial support;
- Conciliation on long-term funding to assist developing countries and specifically the most vulnerable of these;
- Conciliation on response measures; and
- Conciliation on an understanding of fairness to guide long-term mitigation efforts.

Excellencies, Ministers, ladies and gentlemen, Señoras y Señores, I know that in many areas, you are already exploring beyond your national positions. In other areas, less so. If you find your national position is in opposition to that of others, don't ask for compromise - think of our common planet, and offer the compromise first.

The deal here in Cancun will not guarantee all your short-term national interests, but reaching no outcome here in Cancun will endanger everyone's long-term well-being.

Cancun must deliver!

Believe me, the eyes of the world are measuring our work, they will be reporting, and they will certainly verify!

Thank you
