

Opening address by

H.E. Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah,

**The President of the 2012 United Nations Climate Change Conference -
COP18/CMP8 Doha**

**The 18th Conference of the Parties (COP18)
and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of
the Parties
to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP8)**

Doha

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Eminencies and Excellencies,

Members of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

[Peace be upon you]

Allow me first to welcome you to Qatar.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to H.E. Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of Qatar, for the valuable mission he has entrusted in me - to head the 18th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP18), and the eighth session of the

Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP8), on behalf of the State of Qatar, which is shouldering this great responsibility.

I receive this baton to preside over COP18/CMP8 Doha on behalf of my country, from my dear colleague Her Excellency Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, with great honour, and I stand in admiration at the huge task that she undertaken in the 17th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP17) and the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP7).

My deepest thanks also go to Mrs. Christiana Figueres and the Secretariat of the UNFCCC for their continuous cooperation and communication.

This conference is an historic event, and of major importance. This is because of the topics that it addresses on its agenda; because it represents a major turning point in the climate change negotiations; and because - for the first time in the history of these negotiations - seven subsidiary bodies are meeting, which constitutes an additional challenge to its administration.

Thus, I will be working closely with my colleagues, the members of the office of the Convention, the presidents of the bodies and the specialised working groups, during the whole period of my presidency to achieve the best possible results. This is only possible thanks to the efforts of the parties and their representative delegations – because the negotiators are the essential basis to ensure the work of the Convention moves forward.

For that purpose, we have undertaken many official and unofficial discussions to listen to the different views seeking an unanimous agreement. I am willing and ready to continue listening to you, and am ready to do what you deem necessary to come up with satisfactory results.

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Climate change is a challenge for all humanity, so we have to deploy serious efforts to mitigate its effects, and secure a better future for us and for future generations.

A golden opportunity awaits us over the coming days, and we should not miss it. Many of you have stressed the importance of implementing our agenda within the pre-set timeframe, and to achieve that we have to be flexible and we cannot linger on marginal issues. We also emphasise the main principles of negotiation - which are transparency, participation, and a strengthening of the role of state parties in the negotiation process.

Our achievements here in Doha will draw upon past success, and I am optimistic about your readiness to work and cooperate with us during the next two weeks. We have to reach an agreement on the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol; build on our progress in Bali; and make progress on our agreement in Durban. We have

therefore spared no effort in providing all possible facilities to create a work-friendly environment to achieve the desired results.

Dear colleagues,

As the old saying goes, “one hand alone cannot clap” and I look forward to your help and support.

And so, I welcome you all to Doha and wish you a delightful stay.

Thank you.