



**Opening remarks by  
the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on  
Climate Change at the workshop on equitable access to sustainable development  
held on May 16, 2012 in Bonn**

It gives me great pleasure to briefly address you at the opening of this important workshop on equitable access to sustainable development.

EASD is a critical component of the overall principle of equity. The principle of equity is central to the Convention, but we all know that equity is extremely difficult to define in such a way that the definition is acceptable to all. And yet, equity is the heart and soul of the new agreement.

Some see it as cast by historical responsibility and current inequalities. Others see it as influenced by future responsibility and evolving capabilities. Still others see it as their most fundamental right to survive, to live and to prosper.

In Durban, Parties agreed to have a workshop on equitable access to sustainable development at this session. The workshop is organized as part of the negotiations under the AWG-LCA agenda item on a shared vision for cooperative action.

The notion of equitable access to sustainable development was first introduced in the Cancun agreements, in the context of a timeframe for global peaking of greenhouse gas emissions. Here, the COP recognized that the time-frame for peaking will be longer in developing countries, and that social and economic development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries.

The workshop is expected to enhance Parties' understanding of equity and its possible operationalization, particularly in the context of identifying the time frame for the peaking of global emissions and the global goal for emission reductions in 2050. The outcomes of the workshop could also inform the negotiations under the Durban Platform.

In Cancun Parties agreed to limit the global warming below 2C - and to consider a maximum average temperature rise of 1.5 degrees. The global peaking and emission reduction goals in 2050 that are compatible with these goals are still under negotiation.

To move toward these goals, at least three aspects could be considered: specific country circumstances; historic and future contributions to overall emissions; and the capacity of Parties to address the consequences of climate change. These can be termed the three “Cs”. The key question now is how to balance the three Cs.

I hope this workshop provides an opportunity to facilitate a rich interactive exchange on equitable access to sustainable development, which will enable Parties to take this issue forward in a constructive manner, but also with a sense of urgency.

If we continue to delay on emission reductions, large segments of the most vulnerable populations across the globe may be deprived of their basic right to water, to food, to home, to land. So for me the central question is, how can we turn the effort to reach common understanding of the implications of equity into a key enabler for accelerated action rather than an impediment to collective action?

Thank you.

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