

Opening of the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 14)

Poznan, 1 December 2008

Statement by Rachmat Witoelar

Minister of the Environment of Indonesia and President of COP 13

Distinguished delegates, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me tremendous pleasure to be here with you in the historic and beautiful city of Poznan.

We are gathered here today to discuss one of the most significant issues of our time. Even as we deal with the ramifications of the ongoing financial crisis, we know that we cannot let short term concerns, justifiable as they are, prevent us from devoting our attention to the pressing issue of climate change. There is a gathering wave of public disquiet over climate change, and popular engagement with efforts to address it. There are few issues in living memory that have evinced such sustained interest as climate change and fewer intergovernmental processes that have attracted such intense scrutiny.

We do not have an option but to arrive, albeit progressively, at an effective solution to climate change tailored to the sobering magnitude of the problem and in step with the latest scientific and thought advances. This option is well within reach. The Poznan Climate Conference, representing as it does a bridge from Bali to Copenhagen, will play a crucial role in creating the conditions necessary for a successful outcome at Copenhagen.

While we have made steady progress thus far, and engaged in fruitful conversations, it is now time to step up our engagement. We need to use the Poznan conference to ensure that we make the critical move **from understanding differences to resolving them**. And ensuring that we arrive collectively at a vision of humanity's future, and it is indeed this that we are discussing, that is truly and sincerely shared.

We must not let narrow national interests and preconceived conceptions cloud our judgment as we determine the life and planet that we leave for generations to come. It is only if we arrive at this “shared vision” in Poznan that we can set in motion the forces that will enable us to reach and adopt an ambitious outcome in Copenhagen.

It has been my distinct privilege to have guided this important process through the landmark Bali climate conference, and the negotiations in 2008. I thank you sincerely for the help that you have extended to me through the last year.

I will now leave you in the able hands of Minister Nowicki. I invite and urge you all to extend your help to Minister Nowicki, as you did to me, to help him shape a successful and ambitious Conference of Parties in Poznan.

Thank you.