

Statement of Maria van der Hoeven, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency,
to the 17th Conference of the Parties under the United Nations Framework Convention on
Climate Change in Durban (28 November-9 December 2011)

- Distinguished Delegates, Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a pleasure to be here at COP 17, and to re-affirm the commitment of the IEA to the UN climate change process and to climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts generally.
- The International Energy Agency was founded to address the energy security concerns of its members, and of the world at large. And I am convinced we won't adequately address the issue of carbon emissions if we fail to address the issue of energy security.
- We all heard before coming here that no significant progress towards a legally-binding agreement would be made at this COP - and that should be a serious cause for concern. But in the absence of significant multilateral progress, countries should take it upon themselves to continue their actions to meet growing energy demand with secure, low-carbon solutions.
- The message from our latest World Energy Outlook, released in November, is clear – unless we change course immediately, then by 2017 we will have “locked-in” the carbon allowance of the energy sector to 2035, if we are to limit global temperature increase to 2 degrees Celsius. In other words, on our current path, by 2017 we will have built long-lived CO₂-emitting energy infrastructure that will require all additional energy infrastructure to be zero-carbon, or we will fall short of our goal.
- Thus, the door to achieving our objectives is rapidly closing, and while I strongly urge an agreement on emissions, I have a simple message for the participants in these talks: Don't wait for a global deal. Act now. You can and should implement robust policies that will give your citizens affordable, reliable access to energy in a sustainable way.
- The IEA stands ready to help. We have identified a variety of policy tools that countries can use to both enhance their energy security and reduce carbon emissions. Those include among others:
 - standards on energy-using equipment such as cars or electric appliances;
 - cost-effective measures to deploy renewables, with care given to their impact on security of supply; and
 - a price on carbon, including through tradable CO₂ emissions quotas, used in the EU and Australia and actively promoted in China and elsewhere.

- Of course cost will be key. Some of these measures are cost-saving. Many others need careful policies to minimise outlays.
- Industrialised nations have already pledged 100 billion dollars toward climate change, but financing the transition to a low-carbon world remains a challenge that will require mobilising finance from domestic sources, in both developed and emerging economies. Sound and stable energy policy instruments are critical to achieving this result. The IEA already helps in this area, notably through the sharing of policy best practices.
- And let us remember that addressing climate change is not incompatible with efforts to provide universal energy access. The economic, social and health benefits of providing access to all are considerable, and the impact on CO₂ emissions very modest.
- Let me also thank South Africa, and in particular the South African Department of Energy for their success in organizing a very stimulating series of energy and climate events as part of this COP.
- I started by mentioning the energy security mandate of the IEA. I would like to finish by saying that it is time we start considering how changes in climate will affect energy systems and, by extension, energy security.
- ... And to emphasize that any solution to the climate change challenge must adequately address energy security goals.
- On mitigation and increasingly on adaptation, the IEA will continue to support your efforts by ensuring that the energy sector and policy-makers are adequately dealing with climate change.
- Thank you.