



**Opening of the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 14)
Poznan, 1 December 2008**

**Statement by Yvo de Boer
Executive Secretary,
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

His Excellency Prime Minister Tusk,
His Excellency Prime Minister Rasmussen,
President of COP 13, His Excellency Minister Witoelar,
His Excellency Minister Nowicki,
His Excellency Minister Sikorski,
His Excellency Mr. Grobelny, the Mayor of Poznan,
Mr. Pachauri,
Distinguished Delegates,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to thank the Polish Government and especially Minister Nowicki and his team for all the special efforts and hard work involved in organizing this conference. You have organized COP 14 with dedication and friendliness in this beautiful city, which was once the capital of Poland.

In addition to its beauty, the City of Poznan is a historically important place that established the State of Poland more than 1,000 years ago. Important decisions were made here, which shaped and directed Poland's further development.

We meet in this historical setting at an important time in the climate change negotiations: the half-way mark on the road to Copenhagen. You will need to make important decisions that will lay a solid foundation for an ambitious agreed outcome in Copenhagen, to shape and redirect humankind's further development.

In 2007 the world received a very strong warning on climate change from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, confirming that human-made climate change will play havoc with life as we know it if action is not stepped up. Climate change will hit hardest the poorest and most vulnerable countries.

Warnings were also received from economists confirming that unmitigated climate change will impose significant costs on the economy. Delaying action now will only make future action more costly.

You responded to this with the breakthrough Bali Road Map.

Work now needs to be taken forward in no fewer than six bodies. There is huge pressure on available time, which requires careful planning and coordination. I urge you to close items that can be closed and not to devote time to those that show no progress.

Some important achievements have been made in the past year on ongoing work. To list a few examples:

- The Least Developed Countries Expert Group is up and running;
- The Expert Group on Technology Transfer has made important advances towards enabling technology transfer;
- Work on adaptation, under both the Nairobi Work Programme and the Buenos Aires programme of work, is moving ahead very well;
- The comprehensive review of the capacity-building framework was successfully initiated earlier this year;
- Work to assist developing countries with financial needs assessments to implement the Convention has begun in Costa Rica, Egypt, Indonesia, Mali, Pakistan and the Philippines;
- Progress has also been made on the Fellowship Programme and the first round of fellows have been selected to work on important projects such as extending the reach of the clean development mechanism in Africa;
- Finally, with the link-up of the international transaction log, the Kyoto Protocol is now fully functional. This means that the common vision for the Protocol that you established 10 years ago has now become a reality.

I urge you to extend this list of achievements by making progress on key issues in Poznan, including:

- Improving the geographical scope and effectiveness of the CDM;
- Fully operationalizing the Adaptation Fund to enable it to receive concrete project proposals as of next year. Funding to the Adaptation Fund could be further increased by extending the share of proceeds to the other market-based mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol. The secretariat has prepared a technical paper on this issue to inform your discussions on this topic;
- Work on methodological issues, policies and incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries can be advanced.

But there are also some problematic issues that need your attention:

- Issues relating to national communications from non-Annex I Parties are lagging behind. Many of those countries have made a huge effort and have gone well beyond the minimum requirements of the UNFCCC guidelines to prepare excellent documents;
- If we fail to conclude on the way forward regarding issues such as the role of the Consultative Group of Experts on national communications from non-Annex I Parties and the processing of national communications, it will be difficult for the secretariat to handle the back-log, and impossible for Parties to readily access this valuable

information. Important lessons on the implementation of the Convention on the road to measurable, reportable and verifiable action will not be learned;

- Many very valuable and much appreciated, but still too few, voluntary contributions have been received to the secretariat's budget. Working under resource constraints means a huge strain on the secretariat to provide the level of support that you will require next year.

For the AWGs, the past year has been characterized by a huge effort on the part of Parties:

- You met in Bangkok, Bonn and Accra, where you structured your work, discussed ideas in workshops and tabled proposals to enable action on the elements contained in the Bali Action Plan;
- As requested by you, the secretariat compiled technical papers to provide additional information on a number of important issues related to the elements contained in the Bali Action Plan to support your negotiations. These include critical issues related to adaptation, including: "Mechanisms to manage financial risks from direct impacts of climate change in developing countries" and "Physical and socio-economic trends in climate-related risks and extreme events, and their implications for sustainable development";
- In response to a request made in Accra, the Chair of the LCA has distilled 715 pages of submitted proposals into a single assembly paper of 82 pages.

You have one year to go before Copenhagen, and the clock is ticking! Work needs to shift into higher gear! You now have the opportunity to respond to the assembly paper and to refine it further.

You can provide political impetus to the remaining work and focus on identifying which proposals you would like to take forward and negotiate as of now and in 2009.

The Ad Hoc Working Group under the Kyoto Protocol also needs to make progress and turn the discussion to ranges of emission reductions for industrialized countries.

Industrialized countries need to show the world that they are willing to shift gear and take on the leadership role in emission reductions.

With the adoption of the Bali Road Map last year, you recognized the magnitude of the problem the planet faces, as well as the urgent need for strengthened climate change action.

The financial crisis will impact your work as it will many aspects of our lives. All obligations and commitments aside, the reality is that raising financial resources on the scale required will be challenging.

So what could be the role of the Convention in generating its own resources? How can many of the ideas that you have proposed, such as auctioning emission rights or setting aside allowances, generate resources within the Convention?

On the road via Poznan to Copenhagen, the work before you is both difficult and critical. But in the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity, if you focus on what unites you rather than what divides you.

Poznan may yet again shape not only Poland's but the world's future by helping delegates to come to forward-looking decisions. I am confident that, as a service to our planet, you will strive for progress and positive results.

Your secretariat stands ready to assist and support you in every way it can.

Ninety per cent of young people recently surveyed in Brazil, India, Russia, South Africa and the United States appealed to leaders to do everything in their power to deal with climate change. Their trust is in you.

I hope this conference will help take us to a change in tense in climate change, from the future tense and saying "we must" to the past tense and saying "we have".

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