



**The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)  
Nairobi, 29 May 2009**

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

Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Clearly, Africa is in peril. The continent is facing a multitude of development challenges, ranging from abject poverty to HIV/AIDS, from the insufficient and unreliable provision of energy to malaria, limited food security and more.

Consequently, the overriding priorities of African countries are poverty eradication and economic growth in the context of sustainable development.

The Millennium Development Goals reflect this most clearly. Progress has been made in many countries over the past years. A number of countries have achieved economic growth, some even double-digit percentages.

But climate change impacts have started threatening these advances, and will increasingly do so as climate change takes ever more hold. Climate change impacts will be overwhelmingly severe for Africa. They will exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and have the potential to keep countries locked in the poverty trap.

Furthermore, Africa has benefited the least from the current climate change regime. The variety of funds established to assist developing countries with adaptation remain largely empty, technology cooperation is insufficient, and the Kyoto Protocol's clean development mechanism has not taken off in Africa in any significant way.

***Clearly, this needs to change. Copenhagen 2009 is the opportunity for that.***

Copenhagen is the opportunity for Africa to secure benefits from stepped up climate change action that will contribute to both poverty eradication and sustainable development.

The two-year negotiating process on strengthened international climate change action is about to enter its critical phase. The upcoming Climate Change Talks, to be held in Bonn during the first two weeks of June, will see a first version of a negotiating text for a Copenhagen agreed outcome.

Given that it is a first version, the negotiating text is not refined. Rather, it aims to reflect all options presented by governments. Some areas of the text are characterized by growing convergence, whereas there is divergence in other areas.

Africa is clearly in need of a large-scale, predictably and sufficiently funded adaptation programme. There is growing convergence in the negotiations on the need for a strong adaptation framework, which needs to address the concerns of particularly vulnerable countries, including countries in Africa, communities and ecosystems. The framework also includes the means of implementation, namely, finance, technology and capacity-building.

What is still lacking is clarity on the types of adaptation actions to be implemented. Clarity on the types of actions will help to get to more precise assessments of the costs that will need to be covered.

Using existing NAPAs as a starting point may help to achieve more clarity on the types of actions that need to be implemented. This would be a first step towards ensuring timely and realistic adaptation across the continent.

***However, adaptation measures may safeguard economic development gains, but in and of themselves, they are unlikely to boost economic development.***

This is different for mitigation measures. There are mitigation actions that can boost economic development and contribute to sustainable development. For African countries in

particular, mitigation measures in agriculture and reducing emissions from deforestation can make a significant mitigation contribution.

Concurrently, both in forestry and in agriculture, there are synergies between mitigation, adaptation, sustainable development, food security and poverty alleviation. Many mitigation options can result in win-win situations, such as increasing food security or enhancing climate change resilience.

Many developing countries are already implementing climate change mitigation actions, and many have climate change strategies in place.

There is growing convergence in the negotiations that developing countries could undertake nationally appropriate mitigation actions - or NAMAs - with international support.

The scope and scale of NAMAs has not yet been clearly defined by the negotiations. But to my mind, they could include anything from renewable energy projects to reducing emissions from deforestation projects, to mitigation actions in agriculture, provided the additional mitigation benefit can be measured, reported and verified.

NAMAs hold a huge potential benefit for African countries. For example, renewable energy projects that are supported through a Copenhagen deal could contribute to providing access to energy for many Africans. This would drive economic growth and contribute to the creation of a clean, sustainable and independent energy future.

With support in the form of clean technologies and finance, NAMAs could contribute to creating real competitive economic advantages for Africa going into the future.

Africa needs to harness this opportunity and put forward its definition of which additional mitigation activities could function as NAMAs. Overall, the negotiations need to define how to direct financial and technological support towards them.

***But in order to adapt, to embark on competitive low-emissions growth, and to seize the synergies between mitigation and adaptation, Africa needs support through international cooperation.***

Copenhagen needs to mobilize very significant financial and technological resources to assist developing countries in their adaptation measures and additional mitigation actions. Such resources have been estimated to total up to USD 250 billion per annum in 2020.

Significant public funding is essential. Multilateral and bilateral sources of funding represent an important option for mobilizing funding. Yet here it is critical that these are new and additional resources, as opposed to repackaged ODA.

However, such public sources are unlikely to provide the type of support that would be sufficient to meet the full needs for both mitigation and adaptation.

The carbon market is one viable option: the more ambitious the emission reduction targets of industrialized countries, the higher the use of the carbon market and its mechanisms, and consequently, the higher the amount of financial flows mobilized through the carbon market.

A related question is, could investing in NAMAs of developing countries also count towards meeting targets in industrialized countries, and could this somehow be linked to the carbon market? This would entail linking to both the targets and the financial support of industrialized countries.

It is critical that the negotiations clarify the generating mechanisms. At this stage, industrialized countries have taken on a positive position and are discussing mechanisms that are likely to generate billions of dollars.

The benefit for Africa is that a strong outcome on climate change has the potential to include significant financial support for developing countries, captured in a negotiated text.

***Yet to be truly effective, these resources need to be coordinated and access to them needs to be simplified in an efficient governance structure.***

Broadly speaking, there are two main positions regarding governance:

- On the one hand, the G77 & China are proposing that the funds that are agreed in Copenhagen be under the authority of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, with operating bodies to supervise financial flows.
- Industrialized countries, on the other hand, are pushing for governance of funds through existing channels.

A middle ground has to be found to accommodate both. I am convinced that this can be done, but only if it is clear that both donors and multilateral financial institutions work towards the needs that developing countries determine for themselves.

One possible way may entail the following: if developing countries recognise NAMAs and NAPAs as vehicles to control the direction of financial support, existing institutions could continue to be used for channelling resources.

The key is that measurable, reportable and verifiable support is given to NAMAs, as well as to NAPAs, in line with guidance provided by the COP.

***Of all regions, it is safe to say that Africa has most to lose if an ambitious Copenhagen agreement doesn't come through.***

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, at which an ambitious climate change deal needs to be sealed, is only 191 days away – and only six weeks in terms of real negotiating time:

- Copenhagen is the opportunity for Africa to ensure that the deal responds to its needs
- Without Copenhagen, there will be no effective adaptation

- Without Copenhagen, there will be no new and additional financial and technological support for mitigation measures that contribute to development
- And without Copenhagen, there will be no governance structure that is truly post-colonial in that it is founded in equity

The future depends on what we do in the present. Your resolve to get to a common negotiating position is key. With 54 countries, a united African voice in the negotiations will be a powerful force - the force that is required to secure the needed benefits for this beautiful continent.

Your recommendations will be forwarded for endorsement to the highest political level at the special session of the Summit of the African Union in July 2009. This is an important milestone for Africa. And it will be important for African Heads of State and Government who will attend the Secretary General of the UN's high level event to be held in September.

Your recommendations will help us seal the deal in Copenhagen.

Thank you

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