



**United Nations Climate Change Conference
Panama, 1 October 2011**

**Opening address by Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Su Excelencia Sr. Roberto C. Henriquez, Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de la República de Panamá,
Su Excelencia Salomón Shamah, Administrador de la Autoridad de Turismo de Panamá,
Honorable Señora Lucia Chandeck, Administradora de la Autoridad Nacional del Ambiente,
Excellencies,
Delegates, colleagues

I am pleased to welcome you to the sessions of the AWG-KP and the AWG-LCA in this wonderful country! I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt thanks to the Government of Panama and in particular to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and his staff, and to the Minister of Tourism and his team for all the effort put into making these sessions happen. Setting up this excellent venue in just two months is nothing short of a miracle. We feel welcomed and, most importantly, we feel very empowered to have a fruitful session. Thank you.

I would also like to thank Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States for their financial contributions towards these sessions and to the European Commission, Germany, Norway, Switzerland and Australia whose contributions will be received soon. I look forward, with urgency, to receiving the outstanding amounts from pledging Parties.

We all know that we need to use the limited time available in Panama effectively to bridge remaining differences between Parties so we arrive in Durban ready to make that Conference a success.

In this sense, it is perhaps symbolic that we meet in this fascinating country, because Panama connects all the cardinal directions: it connects the North and the South by virtue of its location. And by virtue of its legendary canal, it connects the East and the West. In a similar manner, this session needs to clearly identify where Parties' positions connect in order to advance towards Durban on a firm footing.

It is within our reach to make the Durban conference a critically important step on the road to a fully-fledged global climate regime. But, we also know that this year's agenda is complex and that a balance between and within issues is critical for a final result.

Although we have much work ahead of us, it is encouraging to see the progress already achieved this year in giving life to the Cancun Agreements. The agreements have many components, but today I want to highlight the design of the Green Climate Fund and Technology Executive Committee, as well as progress on the Adaptation Committee. I trust

that during this session Parties may make progress with the guidelines for monitoring, reporting and verification, as well as with the contours and methodologies for the review of the global temperature limit and progress towards staying within the limit which will be carried out from 2013 to 2015.

At the same time, we all know that Cancun did not resolve some of the issues which are key to the evolution of the climate regime. These challenges will have to be addressed in Durban, and consequently here in Panama.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, negotiations are beginning to work against the clock. Durban needs to address both further commitments of developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol and the evolution of the mitigation framework under the Convention for developed and developing country Parties, in the context of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. This may require immediate interim arrangements that safeguard environmental integrity and ensure continuity of the regime. It should also begin to glimpse the evolution of the legal framework in the medium term.

I trust that this session in Panama, bridge between two oceans and two continents, can inspire you to build a firm bridge towards Durban. In particular, I would like to encourage you to make this a firm bridge based on texts, produced by you, which would be considered in Durban. With this Panamanian bridge, Durban can be the success it has to be.
