



**World Future Energy Summit
Abu Dhabi, 19 January 2012**

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

H.H. General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi
and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces
Excellencies
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to address you at the closing of this important summit, and I thank the honourable Sheik Zayed Al Nahyan and the organisers for inviting me to discuss with you the key to the world's future development – energy.

Undoubtedly, in today's world, development without energy is not only difficult, it is unquestionably unfair. And sustainable development without sustainable, renewable energy is impossible.

In this area, at around 1300 BC, the development challenge wasn't energy, it was the lack of a steady supply of water. The ancient peoples solved the problem with an innovation called “faladj”, which for the first time channelled water from mountain aquifers by means of subterranean galleries in a sustained engineering feat that still raises eyebrows in wonder today.

With this summit taking place here in Abu Dhabi, this ancient spirit of ingenuity but also determination has no doubt permeated the deliberations of the past four days. And it is my hope that it will continue to be with us beyond this summit. Because today, in addition to water we have an energy challenge.

What may have been an urgently needed revolution in water technology for the ancient peoples of Abu Dhabi needs to serve as a pointer towards an equally needed energy revolution in today's world - an energy revolution that powers the world's move into a sustainable future.

We are by no means starting from scratch. Momentum for the energy revolution is building and will be much boosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's launch of the Year of Sustainable Energy for All.

Additionally, the beginnings of the transformation are already visible and ... I would like to underline ... are powering ahead despite difficult economic and investment conditions. That is occurring for the very good reason that clean and

renewable energy solutions are becoming the smart investment of the future because they will thrive in almost any economic scenario.

For example:

- Last December, Bloomberg reported that the trillionth dollar of investment in renewable energy had just been spent;
- Just last week, Forbes reported that global investments into the renewable energy industry reached a record \$260 billion in 2011;
- Some 118 countries around the world now have renewable energy policies or policy targets in place;
- And China has just announced this week that it will increase non-fossil energy generation to 11.4%, and impose absolute emission caps on seven provinces and cities.

Next to increasing investments and budding national policies, international climate policy, is becoming clearer and is now an important contributing driver to the sustainable energy revolution. Of course I am referring to the climate change negotiations and specifically to the Durban Climate Change Conference and its outcomes – on which I would like to give you an overview.

Without doubt, the Durban Climate Change Conference was the most encompassing and furthest reaching conference in the history of the climate change negotiations.

Broadly speaking, in terms of mitigation it accomplished three not only crucial but increasingly ambitious outcomes:

1. It achieved a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol, to start January 2013;
2. Outside of the Protocol, it cemented mitigation plans of 89 countries from now until 2020; and
3. It identified the path toward the future legal framework that will cover all nations of the world, remarkably departing from the past.

Allow me to elaborate on each of these:

1. The second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol

The most frequently asked question prior to Durban was whether the Kyoto Protocol would survive. Indeed it has, in the confirmation of a second commitment period. This means that the legal system under which industrialised countries reduce their emissions will continue. It also means that the majority of industrialised countries are continuing to show leadership.

During 2012, countries have to agree on the length of the commitment period and ensure that things are up and running for the 1st of January 2013 when the second period begins.

Additionally, countries that will participate in the second commitment period, will have to convert their emission reduction targets into quantified emission

limitation and reduction objectives - called QELROs - under the Kyoto Protocol. The main reason for this is to ensure that reductions can be measured and assessed as per the Kyoto Protocol rules and regulations.

But the Protocol only covers 10-15% of global emissions, and governments know efforts must go way beyond that. So they also confirmed further immediate mitigation action outside of the Protocol.

2. Mitigation from now until 2020

Under the Convention all industrialised countries plus 49 developing countries have made the mitigation pledges covering the time period from now until 2020. These pledges cover 80% of global emissions and were affirmed in Durban. Additionally, agreement was reached on how and by when both developed and developing countries will report on these mitigation efforts, as well as on the details of verifying these efforts.

But mitigation outside of the protocol will take place outside of a firm legal framework. Recognising that this is inadequate to lead to world to climate safety, countries identified a new path into the future.

3. The path to the future

The breakthrough and departure from the past that Durban achieved lies in the fact that, on top of confirming what they will do over the next 8 years, countries agreed to negotiate a universal legal agreement under which all countries will mitigate their emissions in the long run.

These critical negotiations will take place under a new body in the Climate Convention, the so-called Durban Platform. Countries have already set a deadline of 2015 for the conclusion of these negotiations. They have also set the deadline of 2020 for the entry into force of this new agreement.

This is an encouraging mandate indeed! To put it into context for you: the last time that countries agreed on such a mandate was in 1995 and subsequent negotiations produced the Kyoto Protocol, which bound industrialized countries to mitigation targets. Now they are including all countries.

A strategy as ambitious as this must be effectively supported and responsibly guided. Governments have therefore in Durban further established the infrastructure to support developing countries, and initiated a process to further raise overall ambition.

Infrastructure

In Durban the infrastructure needed to support developing countries in a fully functioning climate regime evolved significantly.

- Durban saw the successful launch of the Green Climate Fund through the adoption of its governing instrument. In 2012, the focus needs to be on

developing the policies, processes and guidelines of the fund so that it can be capitalised.

- The Climate Technology Center and Network, the implementing arm of the new Technology Mechanism, was launched in Durban through the adoption of its terms of reference. In 2012, the immediate priority lies in identifying a host for the Climate Technology Center and Network, meaning that the Technology Mechanism is almost fully operational.
- Durban also saw the launch of the Adaptation Committee, which will coordinate and guide adaptation action. The first meeting of the committee will take place soon.

Ambition

Last, but perhaps most importantly, in Durban, there was a clear realisation that the level of ambition needs to be raised even further. As a result, countries agreed to an immediate work programme on increasing mitigation. Furthermore, their work will be informed by the adequacy review of the global temperature goal of 2C which will be carried out from 2013-2015, as well as by the next assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

There is no doubt that Durban delivered beyond expectations. And while much of its outcomes are complex and technical, two things stand out: 1) the universal political will to act on climate change is tangible and increasingly ambitious; and 2) even more so than the previous conference in Cancun, Durban has a loud and clear message for the world: the future is low-carbon!

Everybody here is aware of how critical low-carbon growth is and the key role that renewable energy plays in that. Current energy generation contributes up to 80% of total CO2 emissions, and global demand is set to increase by up to 30% by 2030.

Durban was a breakthrough on the road to an adequate response to climate change. Detailing the international policy framework will take more time - but in the mean time, the budding energy revolution cannot afford to lose momentum.

The ability of governments to move forward ambitiously can be further boosted, if business provides the impetus... and that is where many of you come in.

Between now and 2015, the policy-making process needs encouragement -- encouragement through concrete action. Action that moves us closer to the energy revolution that we need.

Business has the power to change consumer and supplier behaviour and turn it into a powerful vocal support that gives policy makers a clearer space in which to act. I am encouraged that many enlightened companies have embarked on this. But we need more.

I fully understand the many calls for absolute policy clarity before the private sector can invest with total confidence. But even in the absence of policy perfection, the trillionth dollar has just been invested in renewable energy. This market trend is encouraging, and begins to pre-adapt economies to the new low-carbon era.

Smart business investment and smart government action founded on enlightened self interest are essential partners in revolutionary economic change. That is as true of clean energy as it was of every other major power, transport, high-tech or manufacturing change in history.

And so today I stand before you with a loud request: together with the very clear low-carbon policy signals from Durban, help us break the vicious cycle of policy and action. Help us convert it into a virtuous cycle of action that can power new growth, help alleviate poverty and boost policy-makers' confidence that the private sector is geared up for the low-carbon world. Help us make the revolution real. Help us achieve the change we need.

When the ancient peoples of this area built the faladj to supply them with reliable water, I am sure that they had no idea that their innovation would feature in a speech more than 3000 years later.

I am convinced that all our actions towards a sustainable world have the historical potential to feature in speeches 3000 years from now. But only if the action-policy-action cycle becomes ever more mutually promoting and ever more supportive of an energy revolution that powers the world's move into a sustainable future. To those of you in government, and to those of you in the private sector, I rely on both of your concerted commitments to build the momentum toward the energy revolution we all want.

Thank you
