

**Delhi Sustainable Development Summit
New Delhi, 5 February 2011**

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

Dr. Pachauri,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to address such a distinguished audience on “the way forward,” because we must be forward-looking in our efforts towards a sustainable future. You have been focussing on this these past days, and from what I have heard, you have had rich and fruitful deliberations.

Allow me to add my views from a climate change perspective.

The Cancun Agreements (CAs), reached under the outstanding guidance and leadership of Minister Espinosa, represent a big step forward for the community of nations, but a small step for the planet.

They are a big step because of three major achievements:

1) The agreements form the foundation for the most far-reaching collective effort the world has ever seen to reduce carbon emissions and to build a system which makes all countries accountable to each other for those emission reductions.

Building on emission reduction targets that had been put forward informally in 2010, under the CAs, all industrialized nations have officialized their reduction pledges and have committed themselves to develop low-carbon development plans or strategies .

In addition, 37 developing countries have officialized their nationally appropriate mitigation actions - referred to as NAMAs - which seek a deviation from business-as-usual emissions by 2020, and are encouraged to develop low carbon growth strategies.

2) The Cancun Agreements include the most comprehensive package ever agreed by governments to help developing nations deal with climate change, including new institutions to boost technology cooperation, financing and adaptation. These include:

- A technology mechanism which will be fully operational in 2012 and which will support the innovation, development and spread of new technologies.
- A Green Climate Fund to provide long-term financing to projects, programmes, policies and other activities in developing countries via thematic funding windows.

- An Adaptation Committee to promote the implementation of stronger action on adaptation.

3) The Cancun Agreements provide the strongest signal countries have ever given to the private sector that we are moving towards low-carbon economies, by committing to a maximum temperature rise of 2 degrees, and consideration of a maximum of 1.5 degrees in the near future.

At the next UN climate change conference in Durban, much of the focus will be on finalizing and adopting the institution-building arrangements launched in Cancun, as well as the methodologies to provide the rigour and transparency.

These achievements are undoubtedly a major step forward for governments, but at the same time they are only a small step for the planet.

This is first and foremost because the level of ambition currently on the table amounts to only 60 percent of what is needed to limit the temperature increase to the agreed 2 degrees. Furthermore, a 2 degree increase is, in fact, no guarantee for the survival of small island states. Similarly, no agreement was reached on the year in which global emissions need to peak.

This is contrary to what science tells us is needed: a global peaking in 2015 and a 50 percent reduction compared to 2000 levels by 2050.

In Cancun, nations evidently chose to approach the challenge in a bottom-up manner through a compilation of best national efforts. It is hard to say whether this will suffice to keep the world on a 2 degree trajectory, or whether this would need to be complemented with a top-down international agreement.

Directly related to this challenge is the fact that Durban will have to focus on the Kyoto Protocol. The Cancun Agreements indicate a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol. Many countries want the protocol to continue, others are less keen on this. Yet again, others are of the view that certain elements of the protocol, especially predictability, the compliance system, the flexible mechanisms and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, should continue to be upheld and be integrated into mitigation agreements elsewhere.

Ultimately, it is up to governments to decide how to move forward. Durban needs to build on Cancun, not only on the new institutions, but also in terms of increasing certainty of the international framework.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Next to the multilateral perspective, the Cancun Agreements can and must also be assessed from a national domestic perspective, since they provide important incentives to develop policies that respond to the individual needs of countries.

In terms of adaptation, national policy efforts are still in their infancy, although they are urgently needed.

To date, and in response to international efforts, many national initiatives have focussed on identifying adaptation needs, but little real implementation has taken place.

Over the past days, you have been discussing how local initiatives can drive action. This represents the bottom-up dimension at the national level, which must be accelerated.

For the development of adaptation policies and their implementation, local initiatives can indeed provide valuable input.

This includes, for example, adaptation approaches such as agro-forestry, soil moisture management, or the optimization of livestock production.

By assessing local adaptation initiatives and regarding them as input for policy-making, experience and knowledge from communities that have already had to adapt to specific climatic conditions can be shared and utilized to a country's advantage.

In terms of mitigation, national policy efforts are more advanced.

The process of crafting low-carbon national policies that can work in tandem with international policy has already begun.

In 2010, all G20 economies and also others have initiated or completed the development of economic growth plans that are strongly based on climate-friendly growth, and that go far beyond the short-term economic recovery packages of 2008/2009.

This is encouraging because the 2 degree temperature limit and envisioned low-carbon growth in the Cancun Agreements will be impossible to achieve without significantly scaling up the use of renewable energies. But at present, formidable challenges to this still remain.

For example, subsidies for fossil fuels are currently 12 times higher than those for renewables. Additionally, renewables are still not cost-competitive with other energy sources and technologies.

Despite this, private sector investments have steadily increased by leaps and bounds since 2007. This needs to be expanded in the bottom-up effort and go much further through the appropriate policies, incentives and government support at the national level. The Cancun Agreements provide many incentives that need to be utilized towards this.

Nationally appropriate mitigation actions in developing countries can hold both important sustainable development and major investment opportunities. And they have the potential to better the situation of millions of poor people at the local level in a very targeted way.

For example, a NAMA for rural electrification could attract critical investments from renewable energy companies, provided that the appropriate incentives exist. Incentivizing investments in NAMAs will contribute towards their full implementation to the benefit of

millions of rural people. Concurrently, this would be an important contribution and an important step towards reaching sustainable development goals.

These and other opportunities created by the Cancun Agreements need to be seized on the road to a better future for the planet.

Ladies and gentlemen, I said that the Cancun Agreements were a giant step for the community of nations, but a small step for the planet. It is important that work continues towards climate solutions that are a big step for the planet.

But in the meantime, it is absolutely critical that the small step for the planet is realized, acted upon and taken.

A very wise woman from this beautiful country, Indira Gandhi, once asked India to have a bias towards action. Inspired by her, I now ask all nations to have that bias and to ensure that the Cancun Agreements and the incentives they contain are fully utilized for action at all levels:

- Action at the local level to benefit the most vulnerable and those most in need
- Action at the national level to drive sustainable economic development of nations
- And continued action at the international level to ensure that an appropriate level of ambition and rigour will create a big step forward for the planet.

Thank you.
