

INTRODUCTORY INTERVENTION - OPENING CEREMONY AMCEN

MINISTER JUAN RAFAEL ELVIRA QUESADA

MEXICO

Distinguished President of Mali, Mr. Amadou Toumani Touré,

Honorable Ministers and African Government Representatives

Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program

Ladies and gentlemen,



*Minister of Environment,
Mexico*

- Let me express my deep gratitude to the governments of Mali and South Africa, and to the United Nations Environment Program, for organizing this meeting and for inviting me to share our views on the preparation of the Cancun Conferences on Climate Change.
- It is a privilege for me to be your guest during the 13th session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), which addresses the central environmental issues of climate change, biodiversity and desertification for sustainable development.

IMPORTANCE OF AMCEN

- AMCEN meetings traditionally address with key environmental challenges for Africa and the world. As such, the present meeting is a unique space for dialogue on the continent's environment at the regional level.
- This 13th session of AMCEN is a platform to deliberate on substantive issues for Africa and for the world: climate change, biodiversity and desertification are interrelated challenges that require a coordinated response.
- The goal of developing a common negotiating position on climate change and biodiversity will be a fruitful outcome from this meeting.

ON CLIMATE CHANGE

- In the multilateral arena, Mexico will host the COP–16 next December in Cancun. We are undertaking our best efforts to promote dialogue amongst different Parties and actors in preparation for this meeting.
- Mexico will be respectful of diverse countries positions and active in promoting common understandings. As incoming COP Presidency, we are facilitating an inclusive process, in the spirit of friendship, transparency and full communication.
- One of our key priorities is to approach the African continent as a region whose voice and concerns need to be properly integrated into the outcome of Cancun.
- We have a very honest interest in setting and maintaining a close and constant dialogue with Africa since climate change is clearly impacting the continent in every way.
- The current round of negotiations represents a significant opportunity for Africa to put in place new arrangements that will provide the necessary support to cope with the impact of climate change and that will promote green growth across the continent.
- We believe that COP16 will reinvigorate climate negotiations and reach concrete results to improve the implementation of the Climate Change Convention in the long term; and deliver immediate and concrete actions in the upcoming years.
- In terms of the Cancun outcome, we envisage ambitious and substantive results on two tracks:
 - A global and balanced package that improves the implementation of the Convention in the long term, and enables concrete and immediate action.
 - A second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol

- For this, we will need renewed understandings amongst Parties, and increased levels of flexibility and compromise.
- We also need to enter a dynamic of collaboration, mutual respect, and spaces for a real negotiation where we all need to fairly accommodate our interests.
- Some important issues for developing countries, including Africa, are Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD Plus) and fast start finance.
- REDD Plus is of particular relevance for developing countries. Some considerations that should be taken into account are:
 - It is an area that can effectively integrate mitigation, adaptation and poverty eradication goals.
 - There is progress in the negotiations to build upon in the road to Cancun.
 - Adequate financial support should be made available and must be mobilized in a transparent, adequate, predictable and sustainable manner immediately and over time.
 - There is an initial interim REDD Platform for fast start finance with 4 billion USD.
- With regards to fast start finance, we know that early action is more effective and less costly than delaying activities for future years. Nevertheless, acting now requires adequate financial support for the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions from now on 2012.
- To achieve success in Cancun, we need positive signals and fast start finance is an excellent way to provide these signals.
- Other key topics that will be discussed in this conference are biodiversity and desertification.
- It is also central to promote synergies amongst climate change, biodiversity and desertification, as interrelated challenges whose solution needs to be integral and

comprehensive. I wish you a very productive AMCEN session dealing with these three key environmental challenges for Africa and for the world.

- Thank you very much and I wish you a very successful meeting.

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