

December 2009

*In view of the forthcoming UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen, the Foreign Ministers of Cape Verde, Costa Rica, Iceland, Singapore, Slovenia, and the United Arab Emirates have agreed to strengthen their commitments and call for renewed global action to address climate change.*

Only days before the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, humankind is confronted with the consequences of its past actions. Scientific evidence clearly shows that anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions contribute significantly to global warming. The prospects are grim: rising temperatures will cause major crop declines in entire regions and significant changes in the availability of water resources. At the same time, as some areas experience major water shortages, rising sea levels will be threatening some of the world's largest cities and may even cause loss of territory and give rise to border disputes. Entire ecosystems, from glaciers to rain forests, could collapse, and many species would face extinction. Storms, droughts, forest fires and floods will cause irreversible environmental degradation and desertification, affecting the food security of millions and causing massive migration flows.

Climate change will have the most severe impact on countries with scarce natural resources and a limited ability to adapt to these challenges. Small developing island states, in particular, are among the most vulnerable and face the existential threat from the rising sea level. As preventive adaptation measures are costly, not all developing island states are able to implement such measures on their own. In this regard, financial and technology support must be provided.

Furthermore, climate change may also exacerbate political instability in some of the most volatile regions in the world, creating new geopolitical rivalries over scarce resources. The potential risks of unmitigated climate change are enormous. Therefore, a successful agreement in Copenhagen, with deep cuts in global emissions that limit global warming to 2°C, and taking into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, respective resources and national circumstances, is of paramount importance.

We should also look beyond Copenhagen. Addressing climate change presents a challenge to global governance. The existing network of international organisations is already under stress, due to the complexity of this issue and its repercussions on political and social stability, economic growth and development, as well as on environmental sustainability. Climate change has the potential to exacerbate conflict, but at the same time, it could also foster cooperation by underlining growing global interdependence in dealing with the changing environment and related security threats. Coping with climate change could be one of the bases for creating a more cooperative world. In this regard, the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, especially women, is essential.

Apart from growing interdependence, climate change also blurs the distinction between foreign and domestic policy. Six foreign ministers from small countries representing different regions have decided to act collectively, committed to acting in favour of the environment and sustainable development. Our national policies include measures that address climate change and reflect the need for a concerted international effort in this endeavour. Each state acts as a small point of green reference within its own region, and all points are interconnected to establish an efficient global network. We are striving for political balance, particularly regarding energy and water.

Our countries are promoting clean energy approaches, renewable energy and energy efficiency. Cape Verde is committed to weather-dependent wind power and solar energy. Costa Rica's "Peace with Nature" initiative strives for carbon neutrality through the sustainable use of all natural resources. Iceland has achieved an energy transformation with the successful use of renewables. Despite its constraints in using alternative energy sources, Singapore has taken various measures such as energy efficiency improvement and other policy measures to reduce its emissions. Slovenia will further develop its sustainable forest management and the qualitative use of biomass. Through the multi-faceted approach of the Masdar Initiative, The United Arab Emirates is committed to clean energy solutions, energy efficiency, carbon emissions reduction and human capacity building in the field of renewable energy and clean technologies. The synergetic effect of so many different approaches and visions will be enormous.

Climate change will seriously affect existing water resources, making water a strategic asset of the future. Water is essential for satisfying basic human needs, ensuring social and economic development and preserving ecosystems. Today, the lack of water to meet daily needs is a reality for one in three people around the world. The efficiency of water usage can be increased through technological improvements, changes in human behaviour and better water management. We cannot afford to continue as we have done in the past.

Our countries face different challenges in providing water security. Cape Verde is entirely dependent on rainfall and desalination. Costa Rica has abundant water resources and uses hydroelectric power for over 70% of its electricity production. Iceland meets 80% of its energy needs, generating almost 100% of its electricity with clean energy, and is among world leaders in harnessing geothermal resources for thermal and electricity production. Singapore has leveraged on membrane technology to add high-grade reclaimed water and desalinated water to its inventory of water supply. The United Arab Emirates focuses its efforts on reducing water consumption and improving the efficiency of water supply. With its diverse water resources, Slovenia has developed an efficient water management system. Again, our countries will make an effort to transfer knowledge, expertise and best practices to address the issue of water as one of the main global challenges.

Our planet is a living being with great resilience and will undoubtedly survive without us. Yet, our environment demands that we rethink and reinvent ourselves in order to channel imagination, creativity, ingenuity and entrepreneurship into creating a sustainable world. Awareness of the scope of these environmental challenges is of vital importance in searching for sustainable responses.

Climate change is changing our world in more ways than one. Decisions taken by individuals and groups at the local and global level should fully take into account scientific findings, be ambitious and based on the principles of interconnectivity and synergy.

Strong commitment at governmental level is also required. For any responsible policy-maker, the challenges posed by climate change and the high risks involved if

the issue is not dealt with leave us with no other option but to act together, in the most efficient and synergized way.

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