Statement by Mr. Cherif Rahmani, Minister `s Planning and of Environment - Algeria -
to
the 16th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Cancun: November 29th - December 10th , 2010

Chair, Heads of States and governments, H.E. the Secretary General of the UN, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express Africa's thanks and gratitude to his Excellency Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the UN, for this gathering at this important Conference through which the UN is seeking a new impetitus to climate change negotiations. The stake of the 16th Conference, for us African countries, has been the same : set the post-2012 framework.

We wish to thank very sincerely H.E. Felipe Calderon, the President, the government and the people of Mexico, for their warm hospitality and the remarkable organization of the meeting in this beautiful city of Cancun.

I would like also to express our gratitude to Ambassador Patricia Espinosa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico and Chair of COP16 and CMP6 for her excellent leadership, as well as Mrs Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, for their efforts to make this conference a success.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

How can we mitigate climate change within the limits set by Science? How can we avoid irreversible changes for the planet below? The Cancun Conference will be judged against this objective.

Science tells us that the global climate has changed and will change more during the next decades. At the same time, our tools and our ideas, inherited from the last century, do not make the qualitative mutation necessary to put in place a new socio-economic development model that would sustain the integrity of the resources of the planet.

We are meeting in Cancun to give a new impetus to greenhouse gases reductions efforts for our planet on life support. This is a challenge for which many countries and regions have committed address, because it goes beyond one community, one nation or one region.

Excellencies , Ladies and Gentlemen,

We want here to find a common reference of shared objectives and an architecture that would reflect our common destiny.

Indeed, the situation of each country is different but Africa believes that each of us has to do his share with regards to its historical responsibility.

Clearly, indifference and skepticism on climate change are questions for the past. Today, public opinion has embraced the science and recognizes this major issue and the necessity to address it seriously and immediately, in the interest of the whole world, without ignoring any of the five continents.

Excellencies , Ladies and Gentlemen,

Although Africa's greenhouse gases emissions are low, climate change will have significant impacts on the continent. They will disrupt socio-economic activities, increase poverty and accelerate population migrations, lead to unemployment and the loss of housing. Tens of millions of men, women and children will suffer from the consequences of mistakes they did not make.

This predictable scenario is already happening. It is very close to a social, ecological and cultural disaster. The clock is ticking. The countdown has

begun: to address these important challenges, Humanity has an historical responsibility here in Cancun.

In this spirit, an African common platform, agreed upon by 53 countries, addresses the two key issues of the negotiation: Kyoto and Bali. In Cancun, Africa speaks and will speak with one voice.

Africa is looking forward to being a continent of sustainable development. We are in need of capacity building and green technologies. The rest of the world expects today a very strong African initiative. An initiative for Africa. This new impetitus could be an emergency "Fast Track" program built on concrete adaptation and development projects, ready to be quickly implemented.

Responding to these needs will be a strong signal of the common political will for a success in Cancun. It will be a boost to the negotiations.

A new development path for Africa cannot wait for a new architecture for the climate regime to be put in place. We do not have the time. Africa is under life support.

Excellencies , Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have an historic responsibility. We are the last generation able to curve the trajectory towards economic, social and ecological crisis, and to decide for the future of the planet.

This is the answer expected from us here in Cancun. We have to change everything.

Nature is speaking to us but we are not listening. We owe an answer to Nature, to our planet, to our children, because the role of mankind is to build a future.

That is Africa's message to the international community.

The governments of the world have full responsibility to make the Cancun negotiations a success and to implement the decisions.

Excellencies , Ladies and Gentlemen,

The destiny of our planet is in our hands. The Universe is never discouraged; it goes through its own resurrection ever and ever again.

Thank you.