



**Summit of Central American and Caribbean Presidents
on Climate Change and the Environment**

San Pedro Sula, Honduras, 28 May 2008

**Moving toward a global compact on climate change:
opportunities for Central America and the Caribbean**

**Address by Richard Kinley, Deputy Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

(Introduction)

- Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,
- It is a great honour for me to address this distinguished gathering of leaders.
- I would like to express my deepest appreciation to President José Manuel ZELAYA ROSALES and all the other Presidents of Central America for putting climate change on the top of the agenda of this Summit.
- It underlines your commitment to the fight against climate change. Many of you already showed your personal engagement when you attended the High-Level Event on Climate Change that United Nations Secretary-General BAN Ki-Moon organised last September in New York.
- That engagement at the highest political level was, beyond any doubt, decisive in creating the momentum to get to the historic breakthrough at the Climate Change Conference in Bali where all countries showed willingness to move forward and where negotiations were launched on a new climate change deal to be concluded by the end of next year in Copenhagen.
- Bali represents a unique opportunity to step up international action to combat climate change. Clearly, developed countries must take the lead but it is also clear that your engagement is indispensable.
- There are two reasons why I believe that you, leaders of Central America and the Caribbean, have an important stake in reaching a Copenhagen deal next year.

(Impacts)

- The first one has to do with the vulnerability of this region to the impacts of climate change. Unfortunately, many of you are already experiencing these effects:
 - hurricanes are becoming more ferocious causing economic damage and threatening people

- rain fall patterns are changing, resulting in higher risk of floods and droughts
 - tens of millions of people in this region are at risk of water shortages
- If no additional steps are taken to prevent further increases in global temperatures, these impacts are expected to become more intense in the decades to come: floods, droughts, rising sea level and extreme weather events will pose a serious threat to economic life, to precious infrastructure, to food production, to the access to drinking water and to people's livelihoods, especially on the many small island states in this region.
- It is obviously a matter of necessity for this region to put in place adaptation strategies and policies to protect your economies and people against the increasingly intense effects of climate change. A new climate change deal can support your efforts to do so. It can help you reduce the risks of climate change. It can help you make your economies more climate-resilient so that investments made today will not be lost tomorrow. Furthermore, a new international deal can help you speed up the putting into practice of these policies and measures.

(Green growth)

- Secondly, you have an important stake in a Copenhagen deal because it will offer opportunities to boost economic growth in a sustainable way. It can for example help you make your economies more energy efficient, increase the share of renewable energy and reduce emissions from deforestation.
- I know many of you are already working on this; maybe not for the sake of the climate, but because it makes economic sense and it has multiple benefits. By improving the energy efficiency of your economies, you can lower your energy bills. By increasing the share of renewables you become less dependent on expensive imports of energy. By putting in place modern transport systems, you can tackle problems of air quality and congestion.
- For different reasons, it is in your interest to move further along the low emissions road and spur green growth. It is also clear that many of you would very much like to do this but need international support to go 'the extra green mile'. A Copenhagen deal could provide you with this support.

(Active engagement)

- To summarize: a Copenhagen deal represents two big opportunities: the opportunity to better protect yourselves against the impacts of climate change and the opportunity to further modernize your economies by boosting green growth.
- Seizing these opportunities calls for an active role in the discussions. You may wish to instruct your national climate change authorities and your national delegates to the UNFCCC negotiations to start working out concrete ideas and proposals about how you can reduce the risks of climate change, how you can make your economies more energy efficient and how you could reduce your emissions from deforestation. It is in

your own interest to make clear what you want to do more, what you can do more and for what extra steps you need international assistance.

- By adopting the guidelines for a regional climate change strategy, you clearly indicate that the countries in this region are ready to take this forward. I would very much like to congratulate you on that and I hope that work will progress quickly enough to have the strategy ready in the run up to Copenhagen.

(Closing remarks)

- As I said earlier, Bali has offered a unique, historic opportunity to accelerate efforts to come to grips with climate change; an opportunity that many held impossible but it did emerge. I believe your personal engagement as Heads of State and Government has played a major role in this.
- There is less than one and a half years to get to a Copenhagen deal. It is a daunting task and we will need to pull out all the stops to get there. This will only be possible with continued commitment at the highest political level.
- I would therefore call on you to remain personally engaged. There is simply too much at stake for your countries to achieve a Copenhagen deal and too much to lose if this fails.
- I thank you for your attention.

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