

Executive Secretary's Welcome Remarks

**Keynote Address of the Secretary-General on
Climate Change, Green Growth and Inclusive Development**

**13:40 – 14:30 hrs, 10 December 2007
Conference Room 3**

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

It is a great honour and privilege to be able to open this United Nations meeting on Climate Change, Green Growth and Inclusive Development, and particularly to welcome the United Nations Secretary-General who will be making the keynote address on this very important issue. Before giving the Secretary-General the floor, allow me to say a few words about climate change in the ESCAP Region.

Major Contributor of Climate Change

The region is responsible for 34% of global Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Among 15 major global emitters, the region has seven. However, only two countries - Japan and the Russian Federation – have a quantified emission reduction target under the Kyoto Protocol. The region's share of global Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission is expected to increase due to the robust economic growth in emerging economies, in particular.

Suffering most

While being one of the major contributors to climate change, the region ironically suffers most from climate change. In 2006, the region accounted for 74 per cent of over 21,000 casualties from natural disasters in the world. Furthermore, eight ESCAP members are ranked in the top 10 countries most hit by natural disasters in 2006.

Pursuing growth without causing negative impact on climate change

While the ESCAP region is already a major contributor of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, average per capita emission still remains at a relatively low level. The region is home to two thirds of the world's poor and 800 million people without access to electricity and, as we all know, the negative impact of climate change most severely hits the poor. Thus, the urgent challenge for the Asia-Pacific region is how to pursue the economic growth necessary for poverty reduction while minimizing the adverse impact of economic growth on climate change.

Paradigm shift to create win-win synergy between climate action and economic growth

Considering these vulnerabilities and the need for continued economic growth to lift our populations out of poverty there is a need for a paradigm shift to create win-win synergies between climate action and economic growth.

In response to the challenge, ESCAP has been promoting the Green Growth approach aiming at improving the ecological efficiency of economic performance in production and consumption. The Green Growth approach aims to turn the crisis of climate change into a new opportunity of green economic growth by internalizing ecological costs into the market price structure, thus making climate action compatible with growth by stimulating green business opportunities and climate-friendly technologies.

Expand the basis of voluntary climate actions

Mr. Secretary-General, Your Excellencies,

Another part of the response will have to focus on energy efficiency. Many governments in the region are already actively pursuing this. The Government of China already has a goal to achieve a 20% energy efficiency improvement, as part of its 5-year economic development plan. These actions are in fact voluntary climate actions which are compatible with economic growth. The region has to focus on how to proactively strengthen synergy to create a complete virtuous cycle of climate actions, energy security and economic growth.

Enhance the role of finance in the climate mechanism

In order to create win-win synergy between climate action and economic growth, the climate regime has to focus on making actions for climate change compatible with the needs of countries in Asia and the Pacific, to pursue rapid economic growth without compromising its environmental sustainability.

In this context, ESCAP is focusing on improving the functioning of the market mechanism so that it can recognize voluntary action to improve energy efficiency as climate action and that can provide incentives for emission reduction actions of developing countries.

Technology transfer as the Key

However, Asian developing countries will not be able to simultaneously achieve continued economic growth and take adequate climate action unless there is technology transfer to enable a broad transformation in the patterns of production and consumption.

Much of the technology required, whether existing or new, belongs to developed countries and their institutions and companies. Some are not patented and we have to see how they can be immediately deployed at lowest cost. For patented technology, we need to start a review and debate to see how these technologies can also be made available at affordable prices to the governments and companies of developing countries, including possibly through relaxation of the IP rules.

Coherence required as condition fighting climate change

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies,

Let me conclude by emphasizing that developing countries have massive challenges to shift to a new framework of climate-friendly growth. They have to strengthen economic and social resilience to climate change, and strengthen their economies in order to change to a new development paradigm. They can do this only if the global economic environment is supportive of developing country efforts.

Embargoed till delivery & please check against delivery

The climate crisis requires international solidarity on the economic and development front in order for developing countries to succeed in their national climate actions. If the rules and conditions of the global trade, investment and IPR regimes are not conducive to development, then it will be much more difficult if not impossible for the developing countries to meet targets or commitments in climate change. Thus there has to be coherence in which reforms we make in the global economic systems so that development country have the means to make changes.

Thank you very much.
