

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**ADDRESS TO ESCAP ON CLIMATE CHANGE,  
GREEN GROWTH AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT  
Bangkok, 10 December 2007**

Ms. Heyzer,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Dear colleagues,

Thank you for this warm welcome. It is a great pleasure to be here in Bangkok and to be among all of you. Nearly a year ago, I left Asia for New York to take office as Secretary-General of the United Nations. Today, I am delighted to cap an exciting yet humbling first year in office by returning to my home continent.

There can be no better place than Bangkok to begin a visit to Asia. This, after all, is the UN's own home base in Asia. ESCAP is not only one of our most active, most diverse and most important duty stations, it is also the largest UN body serving the Asia-Pacific region. In fact, ESCAP's 62 Member States make it the most comprehensive of all five UN regional commissions.

The work done here makes a difference in the lives of hundreds of millions of men, women and children, all the way from Kazakhstan to Kiribati. Whether working towards the Millennium Development Goals, combating human trafficking and managing globalization, ESCAP is central to the UN's work for a peaceful, more prosperous Asia-Pacific region. I am glad to be spending Human Rights Day with you.

Today, our work to build better lives faces an unprecedented challenge in the form of climate change. We have the evidence thanks to the findings of the IPCC, which today is being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo. This urgent problem not only threatens to undercut many of the development gains witnessed across Asia in recent years, it calls into question plans for continued progress and prosperity here in Thailand and across the entire region.

Excellencies,

Tomorrow I will travel to Bali for the crucial United Nations Climate Change Conference. I believe the Bali gathering must become the launch pad for negotiations

towards a comprehensive climate deal that all nations can embrace. It must provide us with a clear road map for tackling climate change.

Such a breakthrough can happen only with the active and constructive participation of countries in the Asia-Pacific region. This vast area has many of the countries most vulnerable to climate change, and it already accounts for a third of global green house gas emissions. High population growth and rapid economic expansion are expected to significantly raise this proportion in coming decades.

I recognize that many of you may have concerns about sacrificing growth at the altar of an environmental threat fed largely, till now, by the industrialized countries of the North. That is why I have consistently held that developed countries need to take the lead. They carry the burden of historic responsibility for the climate change problem. And they have the financial resources and technological capabilities to initiative deep and early cuts in emissions.

I also support the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities when it comes to climate change. Yet this principle does not mean that developing countries should do nothing. The credibility of the negotiations that begin in Bali hinges on the participation of major emitters in the developing world.

Instead, the developing world needs to stop viewing climate change solely as an environmental issue, and begin approaching it as a development concern. Our changing climate is a result of unsustainable development practices. And it is a serious threat to human progress everywhere, including right here in Asia.

The latest climate change scenarios point to large losses in agricultural productivity for parts of East Asia. Melting glaciers will trigger mountain floods and lead to water shortages in South Asia. Rising sea levels could lead to widespread displacement of people in Viet Nam and Bangladesh, and inundate Small Island Developing States.

Clearly, we ignore this problem at our own peril. But there is a silver lining to these dark clouds; and it is the remarkable opportunity to forge a new global consensus for eco-friendly and inclusive approach to growth and development.

Indeed, scientists, economists and policy makers all tell us that, by being creative, we can reduce emissions while promoting economic growth. Climate change is therefore our opportunity to: advance sustainable development; encourage new kinds of cleaner technologies, industries and jobs; and integrate climate change risks into national policies and practices

Today, we need to create a new type of industrial revolution based on cleaner technology and a low-carbon economy. Greater energy efficiency is the first step towards this revolution.

ESCAP's efforts to promote a Green Growth approach towards sustainable development is a useful starting point. Your work to promote a regional approach to achieving climate-friendly and climate change resilient societies is also important. These initiatives underpin my hope that ESCAP will remain in the vanguard of the movement towards innovative and practical approaches for sustainable development.

With ESCAP's support and guidance, many countries in the region have already undertaken meaningful voluntary initiatives to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. But developing nations need more and better incentive to spur even greater emission reductions.

That is why I have repeatedly called for a partnership between all nations on this seminal challenge. Climate change is a truly global threat, and we must mount a truly global response.

In particular, developing nations need to be reassured that the international response to climate change will not sacrifice their legitimate poverty eradication and development aspirations. Instead, any grand bargain must include measures to help developing countries move towards mitigation and adaptation. It needs to assist developing countries in three ways:

- It needs to provide better funding for clean energy technologies;
- It needs to spur financial flows for adaptation; and
- It needs to enhance research and development cooperation, as well as transfer of clean technologies, particularly for energy supply and adaptation.

Excellencies,

Talks are already under way in Bali on this vital agenda. The time has come to focus our minds and our efforts, and to push for a real breakthrough. Should we succeed – and we must -- we can transform a looming environmental catastrophe into an era of sustainable and inclusive growth for people everywhere.

Let us commit ourselves to this vision, and let us do everything we can to deliver it, in Bali and beyond.

Thank you very much.