

Madam President,

[Heads of State and Heads of Government],

Ministers,

Madam Executive Secretary,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank the South African Government for its warm welcome and hospitality while evoking the ties which now unite the Principality of Monaco and this country.

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Madam President,

At a time when a great many countries are faced with a crisis which is having devastating results, I am happy to see that we are able to get together and hope we can join forces in our efforts to save our Planet.

Have we got a choice? I do not think so. The options open to us are, sadly, very simple: either radically change our development strategy, especially in energy terms, or wait until nature, disrupted by our lack of foresight, confronts future generations with catastrophic and irreversible situations.

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We are all aware today of our collective responsibility in the face of the success or failure of the Kyoto Protocol adopted in 1997.

Let us remember all the hopes raised by its creation. This legally binding instrument imposed the obligation to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions which were threatening the future of our planet.

At my request, the Principality of Monaco ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2006 and undertook to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 8% by 2012 compared with 1990.

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Convinced that the situation is urgent and that the Protocol is fully justified, the Principality has, therefore, made the necessary effort, which has not been easy, due to the lack of heavy industry. Above all, this effort has focused on continually improving energy efficiency, reducing the use of fossil fuels and developing a transport policy favouring public transport and the use of clean, electric or hybrid vehicles.

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Today, because of these efforts, results show a 15% reduction since the end of 2009. I reaffirm, in front of you, the undertaking I made in Copenhagen two years ago to reach the objective of a 30% reduction in 2020 compared with the base year 1990 and to aim for carbon neutrality by 2050.

We must now convince everybody both of the relevance of continuing the efforts started 15 years ago in the fight against global warming and of the need for the greatest possible number to take part.

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For a long time, people neither understood nor measured the wounds they inflicted on nature. Today, we know all about them. We have an extraordinary body of information provided by scientists rigorously and persistently over many years and experts who regularly remind us of the urgency of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

They tirelessly remind us of their direct impact on global warming, along with the well-known consequences in terms of climatic disturbance, rising water levels in the oceans and the increase in meteorological phenomena.

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Last year, emissions of the main greenhouse gases broke new records, never before reached, as the World Meteorological Organization stressed recently.

Shouldn't this acknowledgement, which we are all aware of, lead us to reflect on our collective responsibility with regard to future generations? Shouldn't it be a permanent guide in our work?

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How can we remain set in our divisions when at this moment in some parts of the world the situation is so urgent that it undermines the daily life of populations directly affected by climatic disturbances?

Shouldn't we have the political courage to look beyond our differences and work in an innovative state of mind so as to find compromises?

Madam President,

Today, we are fully aware of the situation and it is still possible to take action. We have no excuse for doing nothing.

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I am more than ever convinced of the need to promote an agreement which commits all countries here and now, and to do so in spite of the difficulties which the world is facing at the moment, especially the economic crisis which may lead governments to make short-term choices whereas a long-term vision is imperative.

We must prevent the looming climatic catastrophe that we have provoked from getting worse.

It is necessary to establish a common mechanism, allowing a procedure to be set up which will open the way towards a real reduction in global emissions.

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Within this mechanism, developing countries and small island states should be helped in their efforts to adapt to climatic changes and put in place low-carbon development strategies.

To reach this objective, the Green Climate Fund, which aims to raise 100 billion dollars per year by 2020, should be made operational as quickly as possible by approving the instrument project debated in this assembly.

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We must build up confidence by correctly taking into account the specificities of each country. It will allow us to raise the level of our ambition progressively.

A level of ambition sufficient to keep the increase in the average global temperature under 2 degrees Celsius, as recommended by the IPCC, in spite of legitimately expressed doubts.

Today, I am anxious to pass on the message of the Environmental Integrity Group which my country belongs to together with Switzerland, Mexico, Lichtenstein and Korea.

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This group, heterogeneous by nature of the component countries, whether or not they are included in Annex 1 of the Kyoto Protocol, has always taken a concerted, pragmatic and constructive position in negotiations on the future of the climate by aiming at a consensus. On many occasions, it has indicated the way to follow and suggested compromises in difficult negotiating moments.

The Cancun Accords have shown the way. Durban may be an important new step in saving ourselves from catastrophic climatic changes.

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With this end in mind, we must agree on:

- The fundamental elements of an international system post-2012
- The launching of a procedure to strengthen the mid-term system even more
- Finally, the basis of a shared vision, including a long-term objective of reducing emissions and a deadline for peak global emissions

Reaching agreement on these key issues is not impossible if all the parties show courage and real determination.

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Madam President,

In the words of Professor Wangari Maathai, recently passed away and one of the most eminent figures in this African land which is making us welcome: “We cannot tire or give up. We owe it to the present and future generations of all species to rise up and walk!”

Under your leadership, I am confident that this assembly will be able to find a new, deciding path towards a real, permanent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, the sole challenge that brings us together here today.

Thank you