

## Address to the UN Conference on Climate Change

Thank you Mr. President.

Fellow Ministers and delegates,

As all of you would know, few global challenges provoke opinions like climate change does.

This is because climate change is the leading environmental issue of our time.

And unless it is addressed now, climate change may be the possible undoing of all times.

The Government of Canada agrees with United Nations Secretary General who called it “the defining challenge of our age”.

Few, particularly among those here in Indonesia this week would disagree.

Canada’s Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, has said that “inaction on the environment heralds consequences that are beyond contemplation.”

Others have echoed these positions, but few have put it as clearly and concisely as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, whose fourth report forcefully presents the overwhelming body of evidence on the existence, nature and severity of global climate change.

Canada supports that assessment wholeheartedly.

So it is Canada’s opinion, that present day efforts to address climate change should rest upon the foundation of present day realities.

While history matters greatly in shaping the perspectives of nations, our future action cannot rest only upon the realities of a decade and a half ago.

This is the approach we have taken at home. Let me be clear. Canada is determined to honour our commitments as rapidly as we can.

Our mandatory reduction targets for all industries that produce greenhouse gases and air pollution are based on where we stand today, and on the unique circumstances that define who we are as Canadians and how we live and work.

Combined with our new clean energy and cleaner transportation initiatives, as well as actions taken by our provinces, our regulations will reduce Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions an absolute 20% from current levels by 2020.

We believe our plan will drive investment in the technologies that are needed to achieve deep reductions in emissions.

It features continuous improvement in emissions performance by regulated industry. And, it offers the co-benefit of reductions in air pollutants that affect the health of our citizens.

At the same time, we recognize that adaptation to a changing climate is important for our citizens. Canada is a vast northern nation, with natural treasures spread out from coast to coast to coast.

We have already seen the impacts of climate change in the north with melting permafrost, schools shifting off foundations, and the spread of the pine beetle. We too are impacted by a changing climate.

Of course, we understand that there is no one-size fits all approach, that national circumstances must be taken into account, and that climate change cannot be fought through a cookie-cutter approach. That is why Canada supports “common but differentiated” targets.

Any long-term agreement on climate change should be flexible, allowing for all countries to choose the tools and policies that suit their own individual realities. But – and this is critical – the framework must also include some absolutes.

These include:

- First, there should be a long-term focus that sets the scale and timing of global emissions reductions through to 2050, during which time we should aim to cut emissions in half. That long-term focus should drive medium term targets.
- Secondly, we must engage **all** major emitting countries, with appropriate levels of ambition and timetables. Our view is that the binding obligations of industrialized Annex I countries should be supplemented by developing countries that are major emitters to increase the use of cleaner technologies to limit emissions growth.
- Thirdly, it must be economically realistic, balancing environmental protection and economic prosperity, and not unduly burdening the growth of any single country;
- And finally, it should support the development and deployment of new and better technologies.

Canada has come to Indonesia prepared to do whatever is necessary to ensure that the objectives set out by the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC:

- Agreement to launch a new round of negotiations;
- Agreement on the elements of a post 2012 framework; and

- Agreement to complete negotiations in 2009.

We share those goals completely, because Canada wishes to play a leading role.

Honourable delegates, the world has an opportunity to set ourselves on the right course – an opportunity to launch a new negotiation process that will bring us closer to achieving the goals of the world community.

Let me be clear about our commitment.

Canada is committed to the United Nations process and these discussions.

Canada is committed to developing a new international framework, driven by the science.

Canada is committed to action.

We can and will get to our goals, on the strength of collaborative international efforts, unprecedented global resolve; and with an understanding that difficult decisions await us and that compromise must figure in our discussions.

Let us agree to put the greater good ahead of our individual needs and work together to reach a consensus for the future of our planet.

Thank you.