

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
TO THE WORLD SUMMIT ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

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(Copenhagen, 17 December 2009)

The Chairperson,

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Permit me, first of all, to thank the Government of Denmark for accepting to host this Summit on climate change whose importance is known to all. Also, we highly appreciate the solicitude of the Danish authorities for me and my delegation.

I would also like to congratulate the United Nations Secretary-General for taking the initiative to organize this summit.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When we agreed to meet here in Copenhagen, the intention, you would recall, was to conclude an agreement on climate change to replace the Kyoto Protocol upon its expiry.

Meanwhile, the devastating effects of this change which is better understood thanks to scientific progress, has led the populations of the world to become aware of the importance of these issues and the urgent need to find solutions to them. In effect, we are all witnesses to the adverse impact of climate change on agriculture, biodiversity, water resources, and, of course, human food and health.

My country, Cameroon is reeling from the adverse impact of climate change.

The situation is increasingly critical in its Sudano-Sahelian area. While the temperature is constantly rising, rainfall is continuously

decreasing, leading to inexorable desert encroachment. In twenty years, the production belt of certain crops such as cotton and maize has shifted by several hundreds of kilometres southwards, and the northern part of the country now faces a chronic shortfall in agricultural production.

Furthermore, Lake Chad is drying up rapidly. This is a cause for grave concern for Cameroon and the other bordering countries as it threatens the survival of the affected populations.

On its Atlantic seaboard, my country faces the degradation of its coastal ecosystems due to the sedimentary sand silting, floods and salt water level rise.

In the southern part of Cameroon, the conservation and eco-friendly exploitation of the tropical forest poses many challenges on account of the importance of this sector to the national economy.

Faced with this situation, the Government of Cameroon has taken a number of measures, such as the putting in place of a National Environmental Plan and a Forest Development Plan, as well as the launching of the reforestation campaign known as "Operation Green Sahel", in collaboration with neighbouring Sahelian countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Three months ago, in New York at a high-level meeting on climate change, Heads of State and Government, expressed their resolve to reach, here, in Copenhagen, an equitable global agreement on climate-related issues, in a post-Kyoto perspective.

We attend this Summit, convinced that the global nature of climate change equally requires global solutions.

It is important that:

- commitments on the reduction of greenhouse gases by industrialized countries must be clearly defined and articulated;
- technology transfer should be envisaged to help mitigate the effects of climate change in developing countries;

- the proposed control mechanism should take into account the different levels of responsibility concerning atmospheric pollution. Indeed, it is known that though Africa's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions is negligible, it is hard hit by the effects of pollution.

In general, I believe it would be fair, in future financing and technology transfer arrangements, to give special attention to developing countries, notably those of the Congo Basin. In effect, they make huge sacrifices to preserve and regenerate the world's second forest reserve after the Amazon, both of which forest blocks constitute the lungs of the planet as carbon sinks and oxygen producers.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Summit is of vital importance. Nobody denies that. It concerns the very survival of humankind. Already, some of the damage done by climate change is irreversible. This self-destructive process therefore needs to be halted at all cost. We can achieve this only if each and every one mobilizes resolutely.

Remember, this is a matter of urgency.

Thank you for your attention.