



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Opening Ceremony of the Headquarters of the Green Climate Fund
Songdo, 4 December 2013**

**Statement by
Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Republic of Korea for hosting and supporting the GCF in so many ways, thank President Kim of the World Bank for making the climate agenda a World Bank agenda, and congratulate Hela Cheikhrouhou for her recent designation as the first Executive Director of the Green Climate Fund.

This is an historical moment in which the GEF secretariat and the UNFCCC secretariat, which have been incubating the GCF in Bonn over the past two years, are turning the GCF over to its permanent home here in Korea. It is a moment to celebrate, but also a moment to realize the challenge we face.

Dear friends, we have a monumental task ahead of us.

The GCF was adopted in Cancun in 2010, in recognition that developing countries have the unprecedented task of delinking their growth from their CO₂ emissions, while at the same time adapting to new unpredictable environmental realities, and do so within a compressed timeframe.

This is not only changing the tires on a moving car, it is the equivalent of learning to drive the world's fastest car, which is urgently needed but is still under development by the engineers, attempting to drive down a twisting and winding road and trying to set a speed record all at the same time. Even if funding were readily available, this is a monumental task. Developing countries need all the help they can get.

The GCF is an important component, but only one component of climate finance. Just as the UNFCCC process sets the international policy framework for low carbon and high resilience but is not responsible for all climate actions, just so the GCF must set the direction of capital flows but will never deploy all the funding. It must, however, ensure that developing countries will receive predictable and transparent resource flows.

This is an auspicious moment for the GCF for several reasons:

- Climate change science has never been clearer and has raised a clarion call for low carbon and high resilience.
- Governments are incontrovertibly progressing toward a low-carbon international policy framework.
- Power systems in some developed countries are ready for replacement, and in all developed countries there is a huge opportunity for efficiency.
- Developing countries are poised for the biggest growth spurt ever, starting with provision of power. \$1 trillion will be deployed annually over the next 20 to 30 years.
- The financial crisis has resulted in a global savings glut that is looking for investment opportunities.

This all means that the GCF has the opportunity to be the GPS that steers the vehicle of private capital. Not necessarily catalysing investments into energy systems as they will occur anyway, but ensuring those investments are on course to green opportunities and that sizable investments will be made into increasing the resilience buffer of developing countries. Now is the moment to set the course of investments over the next 20 to 30 years. We cannot miss this moment.

When entering Songdo from the Incheon International Airport, you have to cross the Incheon Bridge, one of the longest cable-stayed bridges of the world. I invite you to think of that beautiful bridge as the symbol of the challenge of the GCF: to bridge the distance between the world of climate change and the world of finance.

For a bridge to last, it needs to be firmly anchored at both ends. The Fund needs to be firmly grounded in the best and most effective tools of both traditional and innovative finance. But it also needs to be decisively focused on helping Governments transition their economies out of climate vulnerability and high-carbon dependency.

Nothing changes without transformative vision. The Green Climate Fund cannot simply replicate what already exists; it was created for transformation. We all need to join forces to make sure that it meets its potential because no one can afford its failure.

That is why the UNFCCC secretariat and so many other institutions are here today to unite in our support of a promising and successful GCF.

Thank you.
