

José Manuel Barroso

President of the European Commission

**"Statement to UN High Level event on
Climate Change"**

*Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort*

United Nations High Level event on Climate Change

New York, 24 September 200

Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, the discussion today sends a clear message to our citizens. That world leaders, meeting here in the United Nations, are now finally giving climate change the political attention that it deserves.

I fully endorse what Prime Minister Socrates has said. The challenge of climate change can be met. But only if we act urgently, based on one shared vision for mankind. A vision of transformation from a high carbon present to a low carbon future.

This in turn means – and my friends, there are no easy choices here – to set binding reduction commitments to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

The EU remains firmly committed to, and will meet, its Kyoto targets.

But we now need to look beyond 2012. The EU will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions to least 20% below 1990 levels by the year 2020. Furthermore, we will go further, to a 30% reduction, if there is a fair and effective global agreement for the post 2012 period. These interim steps are essential if we are to attain a 50% reduction in global greenhouse emissions by 2050 compared to our 1990 emissions.

This will not be easy. We have already taken action, but we have to do more to limit the rise in global temperature to at most 2 degrees Celsius. The European Commission is working towards a package of measures on the eve of Bali. Measures to strengthen our emissions trading scheme. To increase energy efficiency in all sectors of the European economy. To make wider use of renewable energy. To take attain a low carbon economy that is at the same time efficient and innovative.

Of course this is a noble goal. But we must also reassure our citizens that there are benefits as well as major challenges ahead. A low carbon economy will be a stimulus to our mutual prosperity, not a brake on growth. Using energy more efficiently means saving money. Switching to cleaner energy sources improves our air quality and our health. Investing and innovating creates industrial know-how and sustainable jobs. Investing in renewable energy strengthens the security of our energy supplies.

Doing all this necessitates the right incentives. Europe is an open liberal democracy. We cannot force people to change. Transformation must be market based.

And in Europe we know this works. The global carbon market, in less than three years of existence, has had a total turnover of nearly 30 billion dollars: and right at the heart of this market is the EU's greenhouse gas emissions trading system.

A system which - cost effectively - delivers almost half of the EU's Kyoto emission reduction target.

And which brings benefits to the developing world. More than 20 billion dollars invested in 2000 emission reduction projects in developing countries. Almost 3 billion euros spent by EU governments on clean technology in developing countries. Projects that will cut emissions in developing countries by more than 2 billion tonnes of CO₂ by the year 2012. We are committed to helping developing countries leap a generation of technology to a secure low carbon future.

While still in its infancy, the global carbon market and the developing concept of emissions trading shows that it can effectively mobilise new finance for a low carbon future, including here in the United States.

Of course we must do more to develop and deploy clean technology, to assist developing countries in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

But our ultimate success will depend on developing the carbon market. And that relies on one more X factor.

Leadership. Ambitious leadership.

Our best efforts, our good intentions are necessary, but not sufficient. The EU has made those commitments, and I invite others to join us.

We have the tools to meet ambitious objectives. We must work together to win the battle against climate change. We must give our negotiators in Bali a clear mandate to launch negotiations towards a global and comprehensive post-2012 agreement. Anything less we cannot explain to our citizens.

But our responsibility as leaders does not end there. We must remain engaged in those negotiations. I urge UN Secretary General to organise a follow up to today's meeting, perhaps in the first half of 2009, to help deliver a global climate change agreement by the end of 2009.

Thank you.