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STATEMENT BY

**H.E. JOHN AGYEKUM KUFUOR
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

AT THE

HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

**"THE CHALLENGE OF ADAPTATION:
FROM VULNERABILITY TO RESILIENCE"**

24TH SEPTEMBER, 2007.

NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,

It is a privilege for me to participate in this important event and I wish to commend the Secretary-General and the entire United Nations System for their leadership in driving the climate-change agenda forward.

The series of high profile activities from the Security Council debate in April, the informal thematic debate of the General Assembly in July, and today's High-level event, show that increasingly the consequences of climate-change are impossible, to ignore by humanity.

This heightened awareness should galvanize a global response for immediate, sustained individual and collective action among all the nations.

In Africa and other poor developing countries, climate-change is already making it difficult to guarantee the necessities of life. These countries, including my own Ghana, are already feeling the impact of change resulting from our oft misinformed handling of our environments and also from effluence caused by the industrialized nations. Erratic rainfall patterns, droughts and desertification, floods and other weather-related disasters are directly endangering human life and affecting agricultural productivity, food and water security.

These conditions exacerbate the already gravely handicapped existence of these nations. They retard national efforts to reduce poverty and undermine progress in development as a whole. For example, over the past two years, till last July Ghana's only hydro-energy suffered from an unprecedented drought causing four of its turbines to be shut down and thereby putting the nation under a virtual black out. The cost to the economic and social life of the country is untold. Then since July, there has been a continued deluge causing havoc to homesteads and farms in many parts of the country, especially, the three northern regions. This has compelled the Government to declare those areas disaster zones. This phenomenon is obviously climate-change related, if not wholly caused by it.

Unfortunately, the ability of Africa and other developing countries to respond to this challenge is very limited. General poverty, over reliance on nature, especially in agriculture, little or no access to technology with capacity to adapt to, or mitigate, the impact of the change, all combine to make these countries highly vulnerable.

Currently, these countries, individually or collectively, can hardly make a dent to the challenge. Indeed, the massive and disruptive scale of various disasters, all climate change related, threatening even the developed world and the rest of the

globe, in recent times suggest that the UN rather than individual countries constitutes the more potentially capable and focused leadership for tackling the phenomenon.

The UN must marshal and mobilize the developed as well as developing nations, to appreciate the threat as universal, so that they will all cooperate to seek an integrated, even if varied, solutions on emergency basis to save mankind. This exercise should be structured to cover both the short-term and piecemeal reliefs as well as sustained, flexible and holistic long-term solutions urgently.

A global vision with global resolve to plan and mobilize resources on an equally global scale for sustained solutions is imperative. This must be the background for our search for adaptability and resilience from vulnerability, which is the theme for today's colloquium.

In this regard, we must never lose sight of the fact that more and more, the world is awakening to the reality that mankind seems fated to survive on a seamless globe in terms of climate, migration, politics and security. This is the challenge the UN must accept to lead mankind to overcome.

For the immediate, the organization must continue to assist the developing nations in their efforts at attaining the Millennium Development Goals, which establish human resource development including enhanced education for people as critical, to grasp the forces driving their circumstances so that they are better enabled to adapt. It must also redouble its efforts to support these nations cater for such life supports as water, food security and better management of land, forests and coastal systems.

Further, it should urge all member states to pursue Good Governance to secure and initiate peace and inclusiveness, effective implementation strategies to enhance the scientific basis for decision-making, using appropriate legislative and regulatory framework.

We are aware that a number of mechanisms already exist including funds such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund and those established the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), for adaptation projects. But, even as these contributions are in the right direction, it must be admitted that they tend to be reactive and not substantial enough. The psychological basis of the facilities must be broadened to include not only assistance for relief and adaptability, but also proactivity and efficaciousness for achieving and establishing the integrated long-term solutions that the world must achieve for its survival.

Mr. Chairman

We must use this meeting to send a clear political message to all the member nations of this organization that all their future deliberations must be influenced by the urgency of this universal problem of climate change.

I thank you.