

**OPENING REMARKS TO THE ROUNDTABLE FOR POLICYMAKERS
“ENGAGING WITH ASIA-PACIFIC ON CLIMATE CHANGE”**

European Climate Diplomacy

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Good morning. It is a real pleasure to welcome you all to this Roundtable on Engaging with Asia-Pacific on Climate Change. I would like to extend a special welcome to our distinguished panel members, and thank them all for their continuous commitment to take action to reduce the negative impact of climate change.

Asia and the Pacific are extremely important to the EU. This is confirmed by the fact that four of EU's strategic partners are Asian nations. We have biennial high level dialogues with all Asian countries (the ASEM format), while EU is an important supporter of the Asian regional integration, as already proved by the political and financial investment in ASEAN or SAARC. The relevance of our partnership with the Pacific nations has been re-confirmed by the approval in the EU Council of a renewed EU-Pacific Development Partnership.

The dynamics of political dialogue between the EU and its Asia-Pacific partners is determined by the intensity of our trade, development and even security cooperation.

In terms of trade, the developments in Asia are a clear signal that EU cannot afford to lose momentum. Asia doubled its share in terms of GDP and increased its competitiveness. In 5 years, Asia will count for 1/3 of world economy, while by 2030 will become the largest economic region. In this context; EU is an increasing economic partner, with trade estimated at 1 trillion Euros. With ¼ of EU exports going to Asia and 1/3 of our imports coming from the region, Asia's trade with the EU remains about 25% higher than its trade with the US.

In Asia and Pacific, EU remains a key donor. In the case of Asia only, the earmarked funds to support development under the Development Cooperation instrument amounts 5.2 billion for the period 2007-2013.

In the region, the EU is perceived as a credible and leading provider of non-traditional security assistance, such as for environment, product safety, energy, climate change, conflict prevention, disaster preparedness, emergency aid, post-crisis reconstruction, policing assistance, maritime security and counter-terrorism in a more neutral and softer mode than the US. We might replicate our successes in East Timor, Aceh and the Southern Philippines, using CFSP funds elsewhere in Asia.

Climate change has become a priority in EU's relations with third countries. It is evident that a global concerted effort is needed in order to respond to the challenges that climate change presents. A robust and ambitious international framework is in the interest of all. In order to reach its objectives, all relevant EU actors should contribute to raising the profile of climate change in our relations with our partners. The Foreign Affairs Council already confirmed this approach in July 2011.

Deep and constructive engagement with the Asia/Pacific region on climate action and diplomacy is paramount for securing the future we all want, avoiding dangerous global warming and adapting to the climate change we can no longer avoid. Indeed, Asia Pacific is key to future climate challenges but also, critically, to the solutions we need to deploy jointly.

Engagement with the Asia/Pacific region is also a top concern when it comes to economic, social and security risks of global warming. According to the U.N. University Institute for Environment and Human Security, 7 out of the 10 nations at greatest risk to climate change and natural disasters are in Asia and the Pacific, three of which are small Pacific island states. The region is also home to the internationally shared water sheds of the Himalayas that are crucial to the wellbeing of 1.3 billion people downstream, including in the world's largest river delta in Bangladesh. International cooperation or competition for the management of such natural and other resources will be important from a security perspective, in the region and beyond.

Turning to the challenges first. It is indeed hard to underestimate the constructive role emerging Asia needs to play and the future responsibilities it needs to shoulder, alongside Europe and other industrialised countries, to contribute to the collective effort to limit and reduce future emissions of green gases and make sure the world returns to a climate-safe trajectory.

Emerging Asia now accounts for about 35 percent of worldwide energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, compared to 17 percent in 1990. That share may reach as much as 45 percent by 2030 in the absence of new policies that significantly accelerate deployment of sustainable energy technologies.

But the Asia/Pacific region also holds many of the solutions to address the climate challenges, in the region and globally. It is already a dynamic supplier of low carbon technologies to its vast home market and to the world. Asia and Pacific countries are therefore very well positioned to reap multiple benefits of green and low carbon development at home and to contribute to the needed deployment of such technologies globally. Many countries in the region have started to define national goals for furthering green growth deploy policies designed to bring it about.

Europe has a lot on offer to help accelerate the needed decoupling of greenhouse gas emissions and economic growth, be it on the policy and technological levels or in the field of cooperation instruments. The 20% climate expenditure target: Commission budget proposal (Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020) of June last year, stipulates the intent to increase the proportion of climate related expenditure to at least 20% of the overall EU budget, with contributions from different policies; this will be also our objective for the ODA expenditure.

Climate change and sustainable development are of key importance in the Asia Pacific region, and will gain further visibility and momentum with Rio+20. The key challenges include sustainable production and consumption, climate change adaptation, disaster preparedness and energy security. In these areas the new DCI and in line with the Agenda for Change the EU will pursue support for the region and efforts towards global climate change partnerships.

All of Southern Asia –from Afghanistan to Myanmar- will be affected by factors such as snowmelt in the Himalayas, the Karakorams, the Pamir and the Hindu Kush and rising sea levels. The consequences for low-lying countries, such as Bangladesh, could be dramatic. It is imperative that all countries of the region find ways to cooperate in order to tackle climate change-related problems, such as sustainable water management and food security.

Similar negative effects are noted in South East Asia. Consider the case of the Mekong River. Climate change will exacerbate dry and wet seasons.

All these are complicated issues requiring imaginative and regional solutions. Organisations such as ASEAN and SAARC could play a useful role here, and the EU is ready to encourage and support such cooperation.

The EU is delivering on its commitments to provide fast-track funding for climate change. We are on the right track with initiatives such as the EU's Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA), which is designed to deepen dialogue between the EU and the most climate vulnerable developing countries, in particular the Least Developed Countries (LDC) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Turning to the Pacific

If most developing countries cannot be held responsible for climate change, Pacific islands, the lowest CO2 emitters, are possibly the least responsible, but the first to suffer its impact, which results in a truly existential threat.

Some islands (in Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea) have become uninhabitable and populations have been relocated. Entire countries (Kiribati, Tuvalu) are predicted to disappear. Adaptation to climate change is a key development objective in all Pacific countries. In the above context, cooperation on climate change is thus at the core of the EU-Pacific partnership.

More recently, at the initiative of the High Representative Catherine Ashton, the EU Council discussed ways to better articulate EU's development and climate change cooperation in the Pacific. As a result an ambitious agenda to renew the EU-Pacific development partnership has been adopted by the EU on 14th May 2012. The programming of EU assistance in the Pacific for the period 2012-2014, whose preparation is starting right now, will be the opportunity to implement this renewed agenda for cooperation.

I hope this roundtable will provide a productive and insightful discussion on the global issues which condition the EU-Asia and Pacific relationship in the context of global climate governance, multilateralism and trade; to reflect on climate smart low carbon cooperation and positive competition for hedges in low carbon technologies, and on how challenges in countries most vulnerable to climate change can be addressed.