

**Remarks by His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of
the Republic of Rwanda, at the UNGA Summit on
Climate Change, Tuesday 22 Sept 2009**

- **His Excellency Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon;**
- **Chairman of the Inter-Governmental Panel on
Climate Change, Rajendra Pachauri;**
- **Excellencies;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

**Africa will probably have the greater and more severe
impacts from climate change than other parts of the
world – but has less resources to manage this challenge.**

**And yet this is very marginally, if at all, a problem of
Africa's making.**

But this is not a new round of blame game – because in the context of the struggle for the survival of our planet, pointing fingers would not only be in poor taste, but also counterproductive.

Rather, what is urgently required is a shared responsibility for a mitigation and adaptation strategy that leaves no one behind because we are all in this together.

We have to appreciate the fact that both the legacy issues and negotiations to solve this fundamental challenge since Kyoto have been primarily focused on industrialized nations – based on the need for reduction of emissions.

The result has been the cap and trade process – trading in carbon dioxide that does not fully integrate the developing world.

In other words, the current cap and trade process is a disincentive to developing countries to adopt a low carbon dioxide emission pathway.

This also creates the problem of leakage: high carbon manufacturing activities in developing nations that are not subject to this trading arrangement.

We should aim for something entirely different.

Why not provide a country by country downward trajectory for all countries above, say, two tones carbon dioxide per person per year; and a constant trading trajectory for all those below?

Then the developing countries below this threshold would have a financial incentive to maintain this status, by trading with the developed countries that exceed their quota.

This would create a large financial flow from the developed world sufficient to manage the developing world's needs for adaptation and mitigation.

The global trade in this "commodity" would eventually yield a carbon dioxide global value in the region of one trillion US Dollars.

This way, trading that engages the developing nations would meet the challenge of Prime Minister Gordon Brown's proposal for one hundred billion United States Dollars per year for adaptation and mitigation in the developing world.

This may not be immediately achievable; but it should be the aim of the Copenhagen negotiation process.

And this is not solicitation for aid.

This strategy guarantees the cap and trade process – and would lead to the lowering of emissions since all countries will be incentivized to reduce them.

Therefore, far from being a form of aid, it is a comprehensive plan for global trade – and for rendering the imperative of saving our planet a truly global responsibility.

From the African standpoint – we have more or less stood on the periphery of this debate on the basis that climate change is an industrial problem, born in the West and destined to be solved by these very nations.

This should no longer be the case – whether in terms of robust participation in discussions on climate change, or in adopting green technologies for saving our planet.

We in Africa should be alarmed by the shrinking of the arctic ocean ice cap to unprecedented levels, powerfully illustrated by successful passage of commercial ships through the Northeast Passage earlier this year – as by the current droughts ravaging our continent from Kenya to the east across to Mauritania to the west.

Humankind inherited a planet with physical capital and aesthetic beauty – seven thousand, five hundred generations of our ancestors have inhabited it over the last one hundred and fifty thousand years.

Unfortunately, we have begun to adopt points of view that are inconsistent with this legacy and the future, including the following beliefs:

- 1. Leaps in technology will effectively mitigate against the depletion of resources;**

- 2. Allocating raw materials to their highest and best uses is, in itself, good morality;**
- 3. There is little inherent value to nature, only as products for us to enjoy;**
- 4. Growth in GDP, by itself, maximizes human well being.**

Individuals, communities and nations that operate only on self interest shall fail to understand that environmental forces have limits and transcend borders on a map.

We have made poor decisions in the past, but I believe we have immeasurable capacity to learn from our errors, and to improve and edify the human condition.

African nations intend to speak with one voice on behalf of the whole planet precisely because of the magnitude of challenge we face in this regard.

This is our purpose at this United Nations General Assembly Summit and at the forthcoming climate change meeting in Copenhagen.