

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to welcome President Ramos-Horta to Brussels. Yesterday, President Ramos Horta spoke about Burma more especially and this evening he will be speaking about a wide range of subjects including my own personal crusade, climate change.

Copenhagen was much more than a Climate Summit. It represented a new organisation of forces in the world and a change in the multilateral nature of the UN system. Different conceptions of development and the dichotomy between global interest and national sovereignty were a fundamental part of the discussion.

The growing influence of the emerging countries – such as China, Brazil, India and South Africa – was plain to see. These joined the USA in drafting a document that formed the basis for the discussions that resulted in the Copenhagen Accord. The process differed significantly from the normal path followed in UN negotiations.

The text outraged many countries, especially small island states and the African countries. They objected to a process in which the major powers impose decisions from above rather than seek out a negotiated consensus involving all the participants.

The Copenhagen Conference demonstrated the weakness of the UN system, in the present format, in discussions on climate change and global development.

Moreover, since Kyoto there have been enormous changes in the world. The terms under which the Kyoto protocol was initially negotiated no longer apply. The Kyoto Protocol assumed a world that was divided in two blocs: the industrialised countries and the developing countries. Today we need to rethink the whole international and institutional framework. At the moment China and Mali are considered to be strictly equivalent.

Europe has to regain the momentum in the run up to Cancun. The conference in Copenhagen demonstrated the need for a realignment of Europe's role in the world. The eventual agreement – one of such importance for the future of Humanity – was drawn up without our being able to play a significant role and despite the fact that this is an area in which we have been leaders and pioneers.

I know from my previous conversations with President Ramos-Horta that he is a firm believer that the Asian countries have a central role to play with regard to climate change. Given the phenomenal rate of growth in Asia, the question of the impact of this growth on climate change is of the utmost importance. At the moment, President Ramos-Horta is actively engaged in developing a common Asian solution to the different problems created by climate change, one that will be presented in Cancun at the end of the year.

Furthermore, in recent speeches President Ramos-Horta has been highly critical of the capacity building process due to the excess of bureaucracy and the diversion of funds towards the already richly rewarded technocracy of international experts.

On that note, let me hand you over now to President Ramos Horta himself.