

COPI Meeting Ministerial Segment
Climate Change Convention BERLIN 5-7 April, 95
Speech of Hon. Bashir Khodabux -
Minister of the Environment & Quality of Life - Mauritius

Mme President,
Distinguished Delegates,

First of all I wish to thank the Government and people of Germany for their kind and warm hospitality.

Mme President,

We are assembled here with the common objective of finding the best means of averting the serious consequences of global warming and its associated phenomena of climate change and sea level rise.

The present meeting has been preceded by eleven negotiating sessions and a series of technical and scientific exercises carried out by the different Groups, especially, the Inter governmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC.

Certain facts are now firmly established: a natural 'greenhouse' effect already keeps earth temperature at a higher degree than it would have been normally; anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases will increase global warming. CO₂ accounts for more than 50 % of the greenhouse effect; the concentration of long lasting gases in the atmosphere cannot be reduced quickly because equilibrium is a very slow process; under the scenarios, developed by the IPCC, the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere will still be twice the pre-industrial level.

Mme President

We are condemned to move fast and our efforts should be geared towards solutions not academic discussions. The success of this Conference will depend upon how effectively we address fundamental issues such as technology transfer, financial mechanisms and global co-operation.

International co-operation is indispensable but it should not transgress national sovereignty and the right to development. These are the premises on which the Convention and its future accompanying Protocols should evolve. Only then shall we have a solid base for real and effective co-operation.

In concrete terms this implies a Global Program of Action which centres on crucial issues such as: obligations, criteria, deadlines; legislations, commitments; institutions, research and monitoring and, more importantly, financial resources and technology transfer to developing countries.

Industrialized countries account for around 75 % of global greenhouse gas emissions. Excessive exploitation of resources, military and technological experiments for the sake of outpacing competitors and achieving supremacy have left in their trail an unsavory picture of depletion, pollution and environmental degradation to a degree never known before. The responsibility of the industrialized nations in regard to this state of affairs is simply inescapable.

Mme President,

Small islands are the first to be exposed to sea-level rise. We are at the receiving end. In developing countries and small island nations millions of people live within one meter of high tide water mark. They have neither the means nor the capacity to fight against consequences resulting from Climate Change on their own. Science and morality for once converge to advocate special treatment for this category of nation, that is the Small Island Developing States.

Mauritius is a small island state. We were the first country to ratify the Climate Change Convention and a Country Study has already been initiated. We strongly support the proposals of AOSIS and believe that the real issue confronting the world is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. This should start with industrialized countries through firm commitments and proper reporting. Developing countries, too, can help provided they obtain appropriate financial and technological support.

However Mme President, certain attitudes and conditions must be done away with outright and we invite the conference to address them here and now:

1. The paper on incremental costs (November 1994) enjoins developing countries to provide baseline through NEP's for negotiation of funding. One of the criteria is that the applicant should establish (I quote): "the environmental reasonableness of its development path". This is the sort of conditionality that Agenda 21 pledged to avoid. And it should be avoided at all costs.

2. Industrialized countries should not try to **shift the burden** of greenhouse gas reductions on developing countries by subjecting their eligibility to obtain financial and technical support already assured in the Convention, to their acceptance of additional commitments.
3. Rule 42 of Rules of Procedure should **be handled** carefully and judiciously. We should ensure that it is used to facilitate not obstruct adoption of Protocols intended to achieve the Convention's objective.

Mme President

Allow me to conclude with one final observation: As we strive to contain climate variations and sea-level rise, **Nature is watching**. Self-interests may stop our march; but Nature has no reason to stop. Nature would, through **climate change** effects, destroy us all, **starting with the most vulnerable** ones. If Global Solidarity has any sense, now is the time and here is the place to prove it!

Thank you.