

Pakistan 082

CONFERENCE OF PARTIES
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

STATEMENT MADE BY
SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI,
MINISTER OF STATE FOR PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS,
LEADER OF PAKISTAN DELEGATION

FIRST MEETING
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Chairperson:

Thank your for giving me the opportunity to address the meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Climate Change Convention.

2. Pakistan would like to join with other delegations in congratulating you on your election as the Chairman of the C O P. We look forward to working with you on the common global agenda of the greatest importance.

Madam (or Mr) Chairperson:

3. Pakistan shares with other countries the concern that anthropogenic emissions are contributing to rapid accumulation of carbon in the atmosphere, leading potentially to adverse impacts on the global climate and the sea level. Action must be initiated immediately to halt and reverse emissions. As agreed at Rio, these actions must be taken primarily by the industrialised countries. Many colleagues have remarked on the technical and procedural issues, since many of my concerns have already been placed on the table by others, I will not dwell on them,

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but will restrict myself to some substantive concerns. I believe that our work would benefit from initiating steps on the following lines:

4. First, it is imperative to recognise that while amelioratory actions are important, the most urgent need is that of steps that will help curtail emissions. Here, we are strongly supportive of the view expressed by the small island states, who will suffer irreversible and unacceptable harm from sea level rise, and who therefore urge immediate action to curtail emissions.

5. Second, there are many proposals on how the curtailment of emissions is to be brought about. As the representative of a developing country, I must insist that the arrangement should incorporate both equity and efficiency considerations, and indeed seek to harmonise these considerations. As such, any solution that seeks to abate and curtail emissions in a patently inequitable manner will be unacceptable to us. Given this, the optimal system would be that of tradeable international emissions permits, to be allocated on the basis of population. This system would provide an incentive to surplus as well as deficit countries to curtail their emissions, since the true global cost of emissions would begin to get reflected in the price of the permits. It would also

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ensure that countries which pollute less are rewarded at the expense of those that pollute more. Finally, it would also provide an automatic transfer from the richer, more polluting countries, to the poor, less polluting ones. By doing so, it may also help meet some of the demand of the latter for increased aid resources. Of course, many details would still have to be worked out to ensure that the goals of equity and efficiency are harmonised at national as well as international levels in implementing this programme. However, once an agreement is reached on the basic principle, these details can be worked out with a modicum of goodwill on all sides.

6. Third, while we are working on the details of a tradeable permits system, we should not sit idly and allow emissions to continue unabated. As has been suggested by many of our colleagues, we should require all high emission countries to commit themselves to targets of emissions reductions. In particular, we should ask for a reduction of 20 per cent below 1990 emission levels by the year 2005. Unless such a phasing is agreed upon, there will be no interest or progress in such ancillary goals as joint implementation, technology transfer, and financial support for other countries. Furthermore, the targets will help supplement and strengthen the subsequent agreements on tradeable permits. They will make it

easy for deficit Countries to begin reducing their demand for permits, and thus their dependence on carbon emissions.

7. Fourth, the targets must be accompanied by an appropriate and effective monitoring regime. In particular, Pakistan supports most emphatically the involvement of NGOs in the monitoring of performance on targets set by various countries, and the participation of NGOs in our deliberations. NGOs played a critical role in the success of the Rio Summit, by debating and publicising issues, analysing mass of the information, mobilising public opinion at the summit and around the world, and generally acting as the conscience of the Rio process. As we look forward to the 21st century, we must ensure that this role is safeguarded and promoted.

8. Fifth, while we do not wish to rule out the benefits that might accrue from joint implementation, we must ensure that the benefits are not obtained at the expense of other, more important goals, particularly those of inter-national or intra-national equity. Joint implementation should not be viewed as an alternative to more substantive decisions on emission targets, the permits regime, technology transfer, and financial support. Given the relatively weak institutional system in many developing countries, there is a danger that

joint implementation can become a vehicle for expropriating local communities and marginal groups. This danger too can be forestalled by a more effective participation of NGOs in our deliberations and in the monitoring of agreed actions.

9. Sixth, since the following remarks pertain to controversial and divisive subjects, I will try to be very careful and constructive. Let me start by talking concretely about Pakistan, rather than the developing world in general. Pakistan, like most developing countries is not a significant contributor to global pollution. As such, while we are committed to all the agreements made at Rio, we are not in a position to remedy greatly the damage caused by more significant contributors to the problem. Nevertheless, we are keen to undertake efforts both to reduce carbon emissions and to ameliorate their adverse effects. However, we need both financial and technical support. This has to be viewed as an integral part of the process. We understand that these demands have been somewhat divisive, so let me try to provide an approach that might be helpful.

10. Let me start by saying that the problems that we face at the global level are not dissimilar to those that we faced at the national level in initiating action on environmental problems. I can talk about how we in Pakistan started on the process of addressing some of these problems. My hope is that this experience will be useful to the leaders of the rich and poor countries gathered here on how to address the problems faced by

the global community.

11. In Pakistan, the awareness of the environmental crisis began in the mid-1980s, at which time we began work on a national conservation strategy (NCS), which was finally approved by the Government on March 1, 1992, a few months before Rio. The NCS is our home-grown Agenda 21. It was produced through a unique and robust process involving the Government, NGOs, the mass media, academic scholars, the private sector, and civic organisations. Indeed, we have been one of the pioneers in the field, and would be able to transfer the lessons from this experience to other countries. While the NCS is oriented primarily to domestic concerns, it has also helped us initiate an effort to understand and address global problems. We have started the work on collection of environmental data; we have plans to introduce Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) into our transport sector; we insist on full EIA's of our energy projects, with the aim of limiting harmful emissions. All of these would lead to reductions, however small, in carbon emissions. Independently of this, we have started an ambitious programme of education, awareness and assistance in population planning, which we hope will lead to reductions in fertility rates, and therefore to the projected size of the population.

12. Yet, progress has been slow. Our institutions are not geared towards addressing the new problems, the legislative and regulatory framework does not provide

incentives for voluntary compliance with environmental goals; awareness of environmental problems and their relationship with the quality of life is just beginning to emerge, and there is no confidence that the diversion of public money to such goals would be desirable or effective. Accordingly, in the first phase of the NCS implementation, we have chosen to focus on the underlying or structural issues, namely institutional reform, legislative reform and mass awareness. We believe that on the one hand, this will help create the legitimacy of a larger effort, and on the other hand create the capacity for undertaking the larger effort.

13. In Pakistan, the popular perception is that poverty, the debt overhang, and the weak fiscal structure of the Government are far more serious crises, and that the drive towards industrialisation is the highest imperative. As such, the diversion of resources to purely environmental purposes is still viewed by many as a luxury. This is true particularly of climate change, which is primarily a problem created by the industrialised countries. The usefulness of tax-based incentives in the environmental management context is thereby reduced, as is the Government's ability to raise funds to implement environmental programmes. This means that in the short run, funding for the environmental effort must come largely from external sources. This support will

demonstrate the usefulness of the effort, and also help lay the basis for a more concerted action in the future. By understanding the value of our natural capital, we are now in a situation where more and more resources will have to be spent on restoration, waste disposal, and protection of the natural capital that is left, often without producing any extra gain in welfare.

14. Paralleling the domestic situation, at the global level there is also a need to create a legitimacy for diverting public resources in Northern countries from local welfare activities towards global environmental action. Indeed, what is being discussed here is not aid per se, but a transfer of a different sort, one that will help Northern countries in the long run. Creating the legitimacy for this kind of transfer is a prerequisite for concerted global action on the environment. As in the case of a single country, at the global level also, this goal could be approached through mass awareness, institutional development, and the establishment of credible legal and economic frameworks. Investment in such things will provide the assurance that money spent on the environment is money well spent, that money spent on global environmental problems, including that in other countries, is money also well spent. Without such agreement and awareness, we can keep talking in circles and never get anywhere.

15. Let me also say here that the problem of technology transfer is not as intractable as it appears at first sight. We have tended to think of it as a supply side problem, namely how to give some information to other people. It would be better to think of it as a demand side problem, namely how to ensure that the capacity for accessing solutions and identifying problems is enhanced. If this is done, the private sector and academic institutions can become active in acquiring technological solutions for the emerging needs. While this would not eliminate the need for transfer on concessional or preferential terms, it would simplify the task considerably, and eliminate a lot of the divisive issues that come out of frustration.

16. In short, I believe that the problem of climate change is a global one requiring concerted global action. In order to be able to cooperate in this noble collective venture, we must appreciate the difficulties faced by our prospective partners, and seek to address these difficulties. I think that such global action requires investment of resources by those who have the capacity to invest such resources. We faced the same problem within the country, when those who had the resources were not convinced that they should be used for environmental purposes. We have

come a long way in creating such recognition. In the same manner, I appreciate the difficulties faced by my Northern colleagues in mobilising resources for urgent action on climate change. We would like to help in creating the legitimacy for such mobilisation through mass awareness, institutional development, and legal and regulatory reform. These would help ensure that the resources would be used effectively and reliably. This should be one of the first items on our agenda for action.

17. Madam (or Mr) Chairperson. I thank you for giving me this opportunity.