

**FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

STATEMENT BY

**MR. MICHAEL ZAMMIT CUTAJAR
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, INTERIM SECRETARIAT**

Berlin, 28 March 1995

Let me congratulate you, Madam President, on your election to guide the work of this Conference. You have been offered a baptism of fire in the ways of the United Nations. Let me assure you that my colleagues in the secretariat and I are your support team, with you at all times.

Distinguished delegates,

The subject of climate change comes to us hedged in by qualifications about scientific uncertainties and economic costs. I would like to use my statement today to focus briefly on the positive opportunities that the Convention offers.

First, the Convention gives an opportunity to all of us to **think ahead** - beyond our present occupations, beyond the next electoral deadline, beyond the next balance sheet - to the future welfare of the planet. It is a rare privilege to be able to rise above the daily grind and look into the future - and, what is more, to try to shape it. This is a privilege that is shared by all of us who work on the Convention - a chance that has to be grasped, integrating the uncertainties and the costs in our calculations. Dealing with a subject as far-reaching as climate change is an opportunity to mobilize our concern for the welfare of our descendants - our children and grandchildren and theirs. This concern is one of the common bonds of all humanity.

The Convention gives an opportunity to fashion a **new culture of international cooperation**. Climate change is not a problem that can be solved by one group of countries acting in isolation. It can only be addressed successfully by the global community, with each component, each member, playing its part in accordance with the principles of the Convention. This calls for cooperation in the true sense of that word, meaning not moralizing, or lecturing or even just funding (much as funding is needed) but, in essence, working together and, by extension, learning from each other. Any claim to a monopoly of wisdom in dealing with climate change will not hold water; any unilateral initiative will not get far. The way ahead lies in partnership; and the beginnings of this partnership are to be seen in the processes that are being established under the Convention - processes for measuring emissions, processes for policy review and processes for financial and technological cooperation.

Among these, the review process stands out as a promising new departure, one in which all Parties will participate on an equal footing, with experts from developing countries contributing to the review of the policies of developed countries - as was the case recently in the in-depth review of the Swedish national communication. Seen against the traditional pattern of North-South relations, this is a welcome reversal of roles.

The response to climate change is also an opportunity for **enlightened enterprise**. There are in this hall many representatives of economic interests - national and corporate. Many are concerned about the costs to those interests of action to limit emissions of greenhouse gases, notably by the more efficient use of energy. It is their right to defend their interests, within democratic rules of the game. But beyond these defensive concerns lie opportunities to take advantage of the shifts in technologies and in patterns of production and consumption that the protection of the climate require. Entrepreneurs who can see and realize these opportunities are a key ingredient of the future success of the Convention. A priority in the coming phase should be the creation of openings for these enlightened interests to make themselves felt, perhaps more than hitherto, in the implementation of the Convention.

I have mentioned energy. It is remarkable that, at a time when every subject under the sun has been the focus of an international conference, energy still remains on the sidelines of multilateral discourse. Yet, as the Secretary-General's message reminded us, a coherent vision of our common future cannot have a blind spot covering the production and use of energy. Of course, this is not a convention on energy alone; it is much broader than that. Nor does it cover all aspects of energy policy. But it does provide an entry point for the international community into a constructive discussion on energy futures - one that, hopefully, will raise confidence to a level that will enable energy to find its place on the international agenda.

Madam President,
Distinguished delegates,

It is difficult to speak here today without being touched by the spirit of the city we are in; the symbolism of the collapse of the Berlin wall is too strong to ignore. The fall of that barrier should have released a flood of new thinking about the way societies are organized and can flourish, for the benefit of all their members. Instead, five years later, we often face another barrier: the barrier of complacency. In the face of crises of politics, of governance, and of finance, in the face of growing marginalization within and between countries, there seems to be little will to abandon comfortable formulas and to innovate. Yet it is "business as usual" that has brought the planet to its present state. Without innovation - here, I echo the words of the President - sustainable development will remain an illusion. That broad aim, of which climate protection is part, requires us to question modes of production and consumption, ways of life and our own tolerance of inequality.

Distinguished delegates,

When I first took up my responsibilities in support of the Convention, the key words that came to my mind, as I was "parachuting" into the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in Chantilly, Virginia, were "efficiency" and "equity". I expressed my hope then that work on the Convention could contribute to a more efficient and equitable use of the world's resources to satisfy human needs and human aspirations. Four years later, as my term as head of the interim secretariat nears its end, I believe those themes are still valid and my hope is still alive.

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MR. MICHAEL ZAMMIT CUTAJAR
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
UNFCCC - INTERIM SECRETARIAT
AT THE OPENING OF THE
FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

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