

6th April, 1995

**MINISTERIAL SEGMENT
1ST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE,
BERLIN 1995**

**SPEECH BY
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Madam President, Excellencies, Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

May I first join other Ministers and distinguished colleagues that have congratulated you on your election as President of this first Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Through you, Madam President, I must thank and express our appreciation to the Government of Germany for the exceptional arrangements made in hosting this conference in this beautiful city of Berlin and especially for the kind hospitality extended to us by the Government and people of Germany.

It is with great sense of satisfaction that I take the floor today at this Conference of the Parties which I consider as a translation into reality of an initiative taken by my Government in 1988 during the 43rd. session of the General Assembly.

~~We recall that although the international community had endorsed the inclusion of the item on the General Assembly's agenda and later on supported unanimously the first resolution on the Protection of Climate for Present and Future Generations, it had showed scepticism to Malta's draft document 'Possible Elements for a Climate Convention', which some delegations had sought to rephrase as 'Elements for a Possible Climate Convention'. Nevertheless two years later in 1990, the General Assembly established the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change with the mandate to prepare an effective framework convention on climate change in time for the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.~~

Despite the fact that the negotiations which led to the Framework Convention on Climate Change were often jeopardised by national political considerations, they have succeeded in bringing the international community together, to confront the threat of climate change, with the best although by no means perfect tool at its disposal:- the formulation of an international convention which commits its parties to address the problem within their national boundaries as subject to their common but differentiated responsibilities.

It is within this context of events that we must now look to the future in order to fashion international strategies that will ensure the fulfilment of each parties' obligations under the Convention. We foresee the Convention as a dynamic instrument which must adapt itself to arising circumstances, and the needs suggested by new scientific information; although scientific uncertainty should

never stall the process of formulating more adequate and effective commitments should such a need be perceived. Consequently we welcome the proposals for a Protocol on Greenhouse Gas emissions from the Alliance of Small Island Developing States and Germany.

Although at this point in time there maybe more pressing issues which need to be addressed, we encourage further discussion on this point particularly by the parties who support the negotiation of a protocol. We consider 1997 as a realistic time frame for the conclusion of such a protocol by the parties to the Convention.

Time however is not on our side and Malta wishes to join other small island developing states, and the European Union in seeking a revision of the commitments which Annex I parties have under the Convention. In particular Malta voices the plight of small island states which stand to face some of the worst consequences as a result of this threat facing our planet.

~~We have only to remember the tragedy of the peoples of the Sehal to imagine the sever social disruption and refugee problems which can also be brought about as a result of climate change, especially in some small island states~~

~~We welcome also the commitments taken by various State parties to address their greenhouse gas emissions on a national level. It is no easy task for each nation to achieve coherence between our development plans and our environmental objectives and especially to seek convergence between the two.~~

~~There is no single solution to attain such a balance.~~ In Malta, which is currently undergoing very rapid changes in demographic, socio-economic and ecological terms, we believe that there are a number of decisions which must be taken, and choices to be made, that can help it to move forward in the right direction. This has prompted my Ministry to set up an Inter Departmental Committee to study the best ways in which Malta can fulfil its commitments under the Convention.

~~An important achievement in this regard has been the formulation of a report by a team of Maltese and foreign experts on the 'Implications of Climate Change on the Maltese Islands', as part of a UNEP Mediterranean Regional Seas Programme. This report has rendered easier the national Committee's main task to prepare the national inventory and national programme in order to address Malta's Greenhouse Gas emissions~~

On a practical level Malta has taken a conscious decision to improve its energy plants so that they are less harmful to the local and global environment. Amongst the major initiatives was a total change over to oil firing instead of the previously used coal. The forthcoming year will see the coming on-line of state of the art, combined cycle generating equipment which through much improved conversion efficiency will help to contain CO₂ emissions.

As almost 20% of energy generation goes into the production of water by reverse osmoses plants, my Government has rightly introduced financial disincentives to limit the consumption of water and hence electricity.

On the other hand we are introducing policies to foster energy efficiency in industry and to increase to utilisation of alternative sources of energy, particularly domestic heating from solar energy. We have set a minimum target of 5% utilisation by the year 2000.

In the implementation of these projects we invite co-operation from our European neighbours and from others who are in a position to assist other States in the global reduction of CO₂ emissions by implementing remedial works in developing nations.

Malta considers Joint Implementation as a potentially important instrument in the hands of the parties, to meet with the ultimate objective of the convention. Although care should be taken to ensure that joint implementation does not serve as a loophole which enables parties to avoid their obligations under the Convention, over-caution should not hinder us from exploiting this mechanism, provided by the Convention, to stabilise and eventually reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere.

~~In these efforts to reduce emissions of green house gasses Malta aspires to involve all sectors of our economy and to cover all facets of life in our country. We are aware of the difficulties that lie before us but we are also conscious of the fact that our commitments under the Convention are a legacy which we owe to future generations.~~

Malta's initiative regarding the threat of climate change has doubtlessly left an indelible mark in the field of international relations and international law. Malta feels that now more than ever it must shoulder its responsibilities within the international community and particularly on a national level to ensure that our children inherit not only a vibrant but also a viable civilisation, ~~to our children.~~

I am confident that this meeting will help us all to become more aware of the full implications of our duty before the Convention, especially in rendering this legal framework to become not only an instrument which promotes co operation among States but which also acts as a dynamic tool in the hands of policy makers in order to lay down concrete, preventive and remedial measures which prepare our countries and our peoples to adapt to and face new situations with the least harmful consequences possible. May we achieve through our diversity, this common objective.

~~I wish you all a busy time, I am sure, which will be both interesting and fruitful.~~

Thank you Madam President