

Maldives

UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE  
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
BERLIN  
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REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

Statement by  
The Minister of Planning, Human Resources and Environment

Madam President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Let me start by joining previous speakers in congratulating you Madam President, on your election. Permit me also to convey to the Government and people of Germany, on behalf of the members of my delegation and on my own behalf, sincere gratitude and appreciation for the generous hospitality extended to us and for the excellent arrangements made for this Conference. It is appropriate that Germany, as a strong advocate of the environment, particularly within G7, should take the initiative to host this first Conference of the Parties to the Climate Convention.

Madam President,

At the outset, I would like to state the support of Maldives of the sentiments expressed by Ambassador Slade of Samoa, who spoke on behalf of AOSIS this morning. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those representatives of governments and NGO's who have contributed to the work of AOSIS over the last four years.

Madam president

The Maldives as a small island developing state, is understandably concerned about the outcome of this Conference. Throughout the negotiations leading up to the framework convention, and subsequently, my country has joined other small island states in calling for more specific targets for control of greenhouse gas emissions. We believe that scientific consensus on the dangers of climate change and global warming are sufficient to warrant more specific commitments than are

contained in the Climate Convention. In this regard, the AOSIS protocol is, as we see it, a sensible and practical approach to building on the framework of the convention. It provides for practical and practicable means of strengthening the commitment of developed countries, and provides for developing country participation in this effort through coordination and technology transfer methods. It is disappointing, therefore, that this conference, COP1, should again be prolonging the urgent and unavoidable decisions embodied in that Protocol.

Madam President,

As we, the parties to the Climate convention, move away from agreeing to make commitments to merely agreeing to negotiate, it is important that the guidelines for such negotiation follow the spirit of the Climate convention. For this reason, the Maldives believes that developing countries should not be burdened with obligations at this stage, and until adequate transfer of resources and technology are possible. It is important, we feel, to not deviate from the essential truth of the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities, in the process of negotiation.

While on this topic, Madam President, allow me to express our concern that the concept of joint implementation as expressed in the Climate Convention be expanded to include developing country parties. We believe that while mechanisms are possible for this process to be carried out, the lack of knowledge on this matter implies that we should move cautiously and in a limited way. Additionally, checks should be in place to ensure that such joint implementation mechanisms are flexible and transparent and take into account the needs of developing countries. At the same time, however, we would like to emphasize that

the priority as we see it , lies in setting targets and deadlines for the Annex1 countries ,rather than in establishing such mechanisms as those implied in joint implementation.

Madam President,

For Maldives, the issues of global warming and climate change are more than scientific predictions. Our islands lie not more than 5 to 6 meters above sea level at the highest point. Our people have lived for over two thousand years in those islands, living close to benevolent natural systems that have protected and nurtured us. Today , it does not take a scientist to see that same nature turn against us, slowly but surely. The incidence of tidal surges, the increasingly frequent storms, and the varying patterns of weather are all indicative of a changing climate with disastrous consequences for small islands.

Madam President,

The Maldives takes a realistic view of its global situation. Like other small island states, we have little influence in determining international actions, and we can easily be bypassed. But for those who would disregard the plea of the small island nations, I will conclude with a quote from Maldivian President Gayoom, who said a week ago in Berlin, and I quote,

' watch what happens to the small island states. The threats that we face today will not be limited to us alone. A failure on the part of the global community to save its most vulnerable does not augur well for anyone. Whatever our fate tomorrow will be your fate the day after' unquote.

Thank You