

MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

**WELCOMING REMARKS
BY THE PRESIDENT**

**I DECLARE OPEN THE FIFTH PLENARY MEETING OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES AT ITS SECOND SESSION.**

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the second session of the Conference of the Parties. I know that many of you, Honourable Ministers, were also present at the first session of the Conference of the Parties held last year in Berlin, Germany. Your presence here today and tomorrow for this ministerial segment is therefore a testimony of your country's and your own commitment to the Convention. I also know that there are several among you who, like me, are participating for the first time in the proceedings of a Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. I salute you warmly for having chosen to join the community of nations here at the Palais des Nations to address an issue of such global importance as climate change.

In the past few days, we have discussed a number of issues on how to move the Convention process forward. Your presence here will no doubt help to bring this Conference to a successful conclusion, and it will contribute to paving in a solid manner the way leading to the third session of the Conference of the Parties .

The main purpose of the Conference is to advance the implementation of the Convention. One particular area in which your input would be instrumental is that of the Berlin Mandate process. A new impetus is needed in the work of the Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate so that it may start diligently negotiating a protocol or another legal instrument to be presented to the Conference of the Parties at its third session. I therefore

urge you to take this opportunity to consult with each other with a view to finding the common ground that will allow the Berlin Mandate process to move forward. As you know, this afternoon I shall be convening an informal ministerial round table, to be chaired by Minister Ruth Dreifuss of Switzerland, which should give you an added opportunity to exchange views on the Berlin Mandate, as well as on other issues of concern to the Convention process.

In doing so, account should be taken of the Second Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The work of the Intergovernmental Panel has been a major source of reference to the Convention, and its latest report is the most comprehensive assessment of available scientific and technical information related to climate change.

Honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates,

Climate change is a global problem. Both industrialized and developing countries will suffer from the negative impact of climate change. A concerted effort is thus needed from the international community in accordance with the common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities of Parties. On the one hand, it is necessary to focus on capacity-building in developing countries so that they may implement programmes and projects that will help to achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions while at the same time promoting sustainable development. On the other hand, well-established consumption patterns must be changed in industrialized countries if they are to face their responsibilities with serious intent.

I wish to conclude by exhorting all of you to join me in this challenging task of reaching a workable compromise under the Climate Change Convention, one that helps us to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote renewable sources of energy and foster sustainable development for all.

Thank you and, once again, welcome.