

**6th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate Change,
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Statement submitted by

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first convey my Government's thanks to the Government of the Netherlands, and the city of The Hague for their excellent hospitality during this Conference and their extraordinary effort to make this Conference a success.

A few days ago, the IPCC chairman summarized with elegant clarity the latest scientific results on climate change. They provide an even more pessimistic outlook for the state of the atmosphere in this new century than previously thought: mean global surface temperature increase of 1.5 to 6 degrees, double what it was forecast before, more occurrences of extreme weather events, sea level rise. With this temperature rise, we can expect a decrease in agricultural output, an increase of disease incidence, population displacements, negative changes in critical ecological systems. And already this year, we experienced, and the warmest July in over 100 years and 27 degrees in November in Athens.

As a response to these threats, at Kyoto in 1997, we all agreed that strong and substantial efforts are necessary to address the danger of climate change, thus acknowledging the importance of problem and the magnitude of the threat to present and future generations.

And in Buenos Aires, we agreed on a plan for constructing the mechanisms that will assist us in meeting our targets. Since then, an enormous amount of technical work has been undertaken to clarify and flesh out the procedures and rules of the innovative ideas contained in the Kyoto Protocol. And here, this last week we all worked hard to further converge different views on a lot of these concepts.

And since we all trumpet our awareness of what is at stake, what remains to be done here in The Hague is to agree on the boundary of the common ground that will provide the basis for ratification and entry into force, hopefully in 2002.

This common ground cannot but be centered on environmental integrity that is real reductions in greenhouse gases.

That means that, because of problems of uncertainty, scale and risk and of the additional concern for biodiversity, activities under Art 3.4 that it human-induced changes in agricultural soils and land-use change and forestry, should not be credited in the first commitment period, nor should sinks be included in the CDM. At the same time, all efforts should be made to close the methodological gaps and cover the inadequacies of data, by the end of the first commitment period.

Environmental integrity also means the exclusion of activities, which may reduce emissions, but cause adverse effects that decrease environmental quality. That means only environmentally benign projects such as renewables, can be eligible for CDM. Nuclear power is not an option. It does not mean zero development, but it does mean sustainable development.

Integrity finally means verification. Enough information needs to be submitted for an impartial and transparent assessment of emission reductions to be carried out by an international group of experts. This information needs to be available, traceable and verifiable. And where uncertainties are inevitable, as for example in baseline estimation, they need to be estimated so that they are taken into account.

The common ground also has to include equity and justice. Thus it has to include a strong compliance regime that assures consequences that would make non-compliance the option to be avoid. And, it also has to acknowledge that those that suffer the consequences are not the ones that caused the problem. Rather they should be provided with assistance to address it first and possibly later to also help solve it. This assistance is forthcoming from those that have the resources, to each according to their capabilities and means at their disposal.

Mr. Chairman,

Greece is a small country. It cannot extend its activities far and wide. But it can do so in a regional scale that includes southeastern Europe and central and eastern Mediterranean.

Anticipating a favorable conclusion of these negotiations, Greece has elaborated a new program to provide assistance for capacity building and technology transfer to our neighbors in this area with whom we already have a large variety of common commercial and production activities. The program provides assistance to these countries to fulfill some of their obligations under the FCCC and the Protocol. A significant part of this program centers on science education and training in climate issues. Another part addresses the need for integration of the expertise of scientists and politicians to identify custom-made solutions that search for technical performance at a low cost. A fourth one aims to increase public awareness of the issues among influential groups with special emphasis to the young.

We are confident that we can, working together with patience, vision, knowledge and understanding, reach a fair, effective, and just agreement that will safeguard the planet and at the same time gain the approval and backing of the public and go into force as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman, your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,
I thank you