

**Statement by Mr. Hiroshi Ohki, Director General
of the Environment Agency and State Minister,
the Government of Japan, and the President of COP3
at the Opening of the Third Session
of the Conference of the Parties
to the United Nations Framework Convention
on Climate Change,**

**1 December 1997
Kyoto International Conference Hall**

The Honourable Minister Chimutengwende, honored guests, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to be elected President of this very important Conference, and I wish to express my sincere thanks to all Parties of the Conference for their support and for the awesome responsibility entrusted me.

I would like to extend my hearty welcome to those participants who have come a long way to Kyoto from various countries of the world.

As you all are aware, the Third Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, so called COP3, is a very important Conference to decide on the global climate change policy to lead us into the 21st Century. I assure you that I will exert my utmost efforts to discharge my duty as President, and I sincerely hope that I can rely on your support and assistance throughout the 10 days and nights to come. I will be sensitive to the concerns of all Parties and will work hard to build consensus.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to my predecessor Minister Chimutengwende. Thanks to his skill, guidance and determination exerted during his tenure of office, we have been able to come this far. I hope Minister Chimutengwende will continue to provide us with his valuable advice.

I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to Ambassador Estrada, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group on Berlin Mandate for his unremitting efforts and outstanding guidance. Without him, we would not have before us the draft text for a protocol or for an amendment to the Convention be negotiated at this Conference. I would also extend my thanks to Mr. Zammit Cutajar, the Executive Secretary and the other staff of the UNFCCC Secretariat for their very hard work, in particular, during preparations for this Conference.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Climate change is one of the most serious global environmental issues that we have ever encountered. In the IPCC Second Assessment Report issued in 1995, and the Geneva Declaration adopted at COP2 in 1996, it was emphasized that:

- (i) The balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on global climate;
- (ii) To stabilize atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations at twice pre-industrial levels, global greenhouse gas emissions will be required to be less than 50 per cent of current levels;

- (iii) The projected changes in climate will result in significant, often adverse, impacts on many ecological systems and socio-economic sectors. Developing countries and small island countries are especially vulnerable to climate change;
- (iv) Significant reductions in net greenhouse gas emissions are technically possible and economically feasible by utilizing technology policy measures that accelerate technology development, diffusion and transfer; and
- (v) Significant no-regrets opportunities are available in most countries to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions.

It should also be noted that greenhouse gas emissions from developing countries are projected to exceed those from developed countries during the decade after the year 2010, even though per capita emissions in developing countries will lag behind those of developed countries for many decades beyond. Only a fully worldwide strategy can effectively address the problem of climate change.

Such a strategy may be based on three principles:

- (i) Developed countries should take the lead now in committing themselves to reduce greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels;
- (ii) Developing countries should also take actions to address the climate change problems in promoting their sustainable development, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities under the Convention and their respective capabilities; and
- (iii) Developed countries should strengthen their partnership with developing countries through the provision of financial and technological support for mitigating global greenhouse gas emissions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The most important task in this Conference is to establish a more concrete international framework for the protection of global climate, through the adoption of a protocol or another form of international agreement.

Since the adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, we have been making efforts to address this difficult problem. Unfortunately however, only a few Annex I Parties are likely to achieve the target for the year 2000 prescribed in the Convention. Through

the adoption of a protocol with legally binding targets, we should ensure that the targets will definitely be met in the target year or during the target period.

There remain a large number of outstanding issue to be resolved during this Conference. The key ones are: the level and timing of quantified emission limitation and reduction objectives, so called QELROs and, policies and measures to achieve QELROs. In addition, we should look ahead to advancing the implementation of Article 4.1 of the Convention by all Parties, including both developed and developing country Parties. I call on all the Parties to work together in a spirit of cooperation and friendly compromise. I particularly wish to urge the developed countries with the greatest economic capacity, including my own country to demonstrate such spirit and leadership in action.

We also have other important issues to deal with during this Conference. I particularly wish to stress the need to discuss future steps to be taken after Kyoto for the effective implementation of the protocol and offer steps towards the objective of the Convention. We cannot solve all the climate change problems here in Kyoto alone. There is still a long way to go and many more negotiations ahead. Through an international agreement to be achieved at this Conference, the international community should take a definite first step forward to promoting climate protection policies for the 21st Century.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I close my statement, permit me to say a few words about the City of Kyoto. Kyoto was the capital of Japan for over 1000 years starting from the 8th Century and the city is proud of maintaining many old temples and townhouses as well as traditional culture preserved in the everyday life of citizens. I hope you can spare some time to enjoy the scenery and atmosphere of this old city.

As the nation's capital for many centuries, it has been a witness to a series of Japan's most important historical events. The process of Japan's modernization towards the Meiji Era also began in Kyoto about 140 years ago.

I sincerely hope that we could make another important historical decision here in Kyoto, create a new chapter in the history of mankind, to protect the environment of our precious globe and to secure sustainable basis for the future prosperity of all humanity.

Thank you for your attention.