

Thank you, Mr. Chairman/Ms. Chairwoman.

We are a group of 36 scientists, environmental activists, politicians, and students from 14 countries who have come to this conference by train and boat. We have travelled more than 14,000 kilometres, with stops in Berlin, Warsaw, Moscow, Novosibirsk and Beijing.

Our journey gave us a unique opportunity to interact with people from many regions and countries to discuss common concerns and problems. We learnt from NGOs and scientists about the regional effects of climate change. We found communities who are already suffering from climate change, fearful for their future. In Siberia, people are anticipating the destruction of their forests fires in only a few decades. In China there is much concern about the increased frequency of catastrophic flooding of low-land coastal areas, and the massive disruption of their agricultural systems. The fact that we witnessed these regional problems has enabled us to understand with much greater depth the reality of climate change.

Travelling by train and boat, rather than by plane, reduced the environmental impact of our journey since travelling overland produces ^{one eighth} ~~on third~~ of the greenhouse gas emissions of the same journey by air. Of all modes of transport, air travel is the most dangerous to the climate because emissions from aircraft directly affect the most sensitive parts of the atmosphere, and these effects are long-lasting. The recent dramatic increase in air travel is totally unsustainable, and we ask the COP to tackle the problem of reducing emissions from aircraft in future protocols.

Arriving at COP3 we found a very limited and discouraging process. The confrontational tone of the present negotiations cannot resolve what is a common, global problem. None of the greenhouse gas reductions the COP are considering adequately reflect the gravity of the problems that changes in our climate will bring. We need to look at what the planet can bear, then work out what levels of CO2 and other greenhouse gases can be emitted rather than relying on weak commitments put forward by those too heavily influenced by the economic/industrial lobby.

During our journey we learnt about many new and innovative ways of tackling the problems, such as renewable energies, energy efficiency, new types of housing, development of good public transport systems (etc). Many of these practical answers are not brought into the discussion and we ask that in future these ideas are discussed.

But more than this, we all need to be prepared to fundamentally change our lifestyles in order that we can meet the responsibility of caring for our planet. It is quite possible that in doing this we would not even use our 'full quota' of emissions anyway.

Whatever decision the COP takes, the result will affect the future of billions of people and the earth itself. We need a new approach of co-operation that can deliver a collaborative and long term solution, based on equity.

One very positive solution that we could all implement now is to investigate ways of making the conference itself more sustainable ie reducing the need to travel by using video conferencing, increased use of the Internet, and regional conferences

As a final point, we would like to invite participants to join our Climate Ship to COP4 in Buenos Aires next year.

Thank you Mr. Chairman/Ms. Chairwoman for the opportunity to make our statement.

Speaker: Michelle Valentine