

STATEMENT OF THE AFRICA GROUP OF NATIONS PRESENTED BY HON. DR. KEZIMBIRA MIYINGO, MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENVIRONMENT (UGANDA) AND CHAIRMAN OF THE AFRICA MINISTERS TO THE 5TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CLIMATE CHANGE CONVENTION, BONN, 25 OCTOBER – 5 NOVEMBER 1999.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost I bring you greetings from the entire political leadership of Africa on whose behalf I will present the Africa position at this 5th conference of Parties (COP5).

Mr. president, as you are aware, many of the developing countries particularly those in Africa are still struggling with abject poverty but the struggle against poverty is being slowed down by the adverse effects of climate change.

As I speak Mr. President, many of the African countries are struggling to cope with either recurrent droughts with the attendant shortages of food and shortages of clean drinking water or the effects of floods and land slides. The increasing frequency of these extreme weather events are a manifestation of climate change arising from the high concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGS) largely produced in annex1 countries.

Africa, therefore, calls upon all the developed countries to take urgent steps to meet their commitments under the convention. Africa urges annex1 parties to effect their greenhouse gas reductions through primarily domestic action. There is urgent need for all parties, particularly the annex1 Parties to ratify the Kyoto protocol. Furthermore the developing country parties need to take all necessary steps to integrate climate change issues into their development plans.

Mr. president, as far as Africa is concerned, we see the issues that need urgent resolution at cop5 as:

1. capacity building
2. adaptation to adverse effects of climate change
3. access to and support for development and transfer of clean technologies
4. access to development financing through the clean development mechanism (CDM), and activities implemented jointly (AIJ).

Mr. president capacity building is critical for the effective participation of African countries in the convention and the Kyoto protocol processes. Africa notes with concern that the main constraints to implementing the convention include the lack of financial resources; absence of appropriate institutions; lack of access to necessary technologies and the know-how.

Many of the African countries are also the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and require special initiatives to address their adaptation needs.

With respect to the CDM, Africa would like to reaffirm the desire to participate in the process and no effort will be spared to make use of the available opportunities as we believe there are many windows for sustainable development. CDM projects must lead to concrete, verifiable and measurable environmental benefits. We urge governments of annex1 parties to play a positive role in ensuring adequate and equitable participation of African countries in CDM projects.

The issues of afforestation, reforestation, and the preservation/reclamation of wetlands should feature high among CDM projects. Uganda particularly values this approach because these natural resources directly contribute to a stable local climate, let alone the carbon dioxide (co2) sequestration. This must be combined with renewable energy.

The issue of research and systematic climate observations is uniquely worrisome to Africa as this continent continues to have large tracts of land devoid of climate information thus creating deficiencies in the monitoring of climate and climate change. Special initiatives are required to address the issue of monitoring equipment.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am aware that many of the issues before cop5 are not being resolved as fast as Africa would have liked. Africa calls upon all parties to positively contribute to the progress of the negotiations and the implementation of the convention and Kyoto protocol processes. Let us be serious and solve all outstanding issues. by the end of cop6 Mr. president there should be no rest, negotiators must burn the midnight candle.

As I conclude Mr. President, I would like to remind both developed and developing parties of the important roles that each must play in advancing both the convention and the Kyoto protocol processes.

While Africa recognizes the role that the private sector can play in the implementation of the CDM, governments of annex1 parties must still play the lead role. The issue of climate change is similar to the issue of national security and cannot be left to the private sector. Mother earth is threatened to perish and therefore we can not sit back and abdicate our responsibilities. Let us rise to the challenge!

Annex1 parties must always remember and appreciate the buffer role played by Africa by its small GHG emissions of 3.1%. There is no doubt that this contributes to the present livable global environment.

Mr. President, your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Africa, I wish to thank the Federal Government of Germany for hosting us in this beautiful city of Bonn. Allow me Mr. President to thank H.E. the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany for honouring cop5 by coming to address it at its opening. I want to thank you, Mr. President, the UNFCCC secretariat, the negotiators, the interpreters and all the participants for the work done. Without you all the achievements of this conference would not have been realised. Special thanks go to Mr. Philip Gwage of Uganda who has chaired the technical African group of negotiators for the last 2 years.

Aluta continua!

Remember "united we stand , divided we fall"

I thank you Mr. President