



150 ROUTE DE FERNEY  
P.O. BOX 2100  
1211 GENEVA 2 SWITZERLAND

TELEPHONE 022 - 791 61 11  
TELEFAX 022 - 791 03 61  
TELEX 415 730 OIK CH  
CABLE OIKOUMENE GENEVA

**STATEMENT**  
**TO THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF**  
**THE THIRD SESSION OF THE**  
**CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP3)**  
**TO THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON**  
**CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Kyoto, Japan**  
**December 9, 1997**

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, Observers,

We recognise that the COP3 negotiations are at a difficult point. We make this statement on behalf of the World Council of Churches with a combination of humility and prayer, wanting to assist the process and yet needing to speak the truth as we discern it.

For us in the World Council of Churches, the core of the COP3 agenda is justice.

Justice means being held responsible for one's actions.

The rich of the world, through promotion of the current economic model, have been and continue to be responsible for the vast majority of emissions causing human-produced climate change but seem unwilling to honestly acknowledge that responsibility and translate it into action. It is ironic that countries which exult in their domestic legal principles feel themselves above the law when it comes to their international obligations on climate change.

Justice means being held accountable for promises you make.

The rich of the world have broken their Rio promise to stabilise emissions by 2000 at 1990 levels and yet seem to exhibit no embarrassment at their failure.

Justice means being held responsible for the suffering you cause to others.

Small island states, millions of environmental refugees, and future generations will suffer as a result of the callous exploitation of the Earth's resources by the rich.

Justice means being held accountable for abuse of power.

Human societies, particularly in the over-developed countries, are damaging the environment through climate change with little respect for the inherent worth of other species which we believe to be loved by God as are we.

Justice means an equitable sharing of the Earth's resources.

Millions of people lack the necessities for a decent quality of life. It is the height of arrogance to propose that restrictive commitments be placed on the poor to make up for the delinquencies of the rich. Over-consumption of the rich and poverty of the poor must both be eliminated to ensure quality of life for all.

Justice demands truth.

Destructive misinformation campaigns are being used by groups with powerful economic self-interest with the intention of preventing meaningful action on climate change.

Justice requires honesty.

The world is not so easily divided into the rich North and the poor South as we used to think. There are a few wealthy and powerful countries and elites within the category referred to as developing countries who sometimes misuse this classification of nations to disguise their economic self-interest.

God's justice is strict but it is not cruel. We are all here in Kyoto as brothers and sisters equal before God within the community of creation - a creation which we all want to be healthy and thriving for future generations. In affirmation of the goodness of creation (Genesis 1:25), God beckons us to respect all forms of life. In what we do at COP3, we must not betray life.

Confidence-building measures are needed so that together we can reduce the threat of climate change:

- Industrialised countries must demonstrate, in the near future, real and significant reductions in domestic greenhouse gas emissions which many studies have shown to be possible with a considerable net benefit to their economies.
- Though developing countries should not be subject to formal emission limitation commitments yet, many of them are pursuing measures and can continue their efforts to become more energy-efficient and to limit greenhouse gas emissions.
- The sharing of finance and technological resources is needed but it is also very important to exchange experiences from both South and North including those of indigenous cultures, women's organisations and others which can offer lessons and tools for learning to live in a socially just, equitable and ecologically sustainable manner.

In these remaining days of COP3, let us shift our energies away from trying to figure out how to attain the minimum and channel them instead toward creative risk-taking options for accomplishing the maximum. Thank you.

#### Notes

1. At COP3, the World Council of Churches (WCC) has been represented by a delegation consisting of:  
Lic. Elías Crisóstomo Abramides, Ecumenical Patriarchate, Argentina  
Ms. Nafisa Goga D'Souza, India  
Dr. David G. Hallman, Canada (Head of Delegation)  
Mr. Prawate Khid-Arn, Christian Conference of Asia, Hong Kong  
Dr. Karin Léxen, Christian Council of Sweden, Sweden  
Dr. Alfredo Salibián, Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias, Argentina  
Rev. Tsutom Shoji, National Council of Churches in Japan, Japan  
Rev. Bill Somplatsky-Jarman, National Council of Churches of Christ, United States of America  
Dr. Larisa Skuratovskaya, Russia
2. The World Council of Churches (WCC) has been involved in the climate change issue for ten years. To encourage governments of industrialised countries to accept their responsibility in the lead-up to COP3, the WCC co-ordinated a petition campaign through the churches in 23 industrialised countries which called on those governments to meet the stabilisation commitment of Rio, adopt a binding international agreement for further reductions post-2000, and engage citizen participation more forcefully in finding solutions.
3. The "Kyoto Appeal" presented at the Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> Inter-Religious Gathering on Climate Change (including Buddhists, Christians, Shintos and New Religions) contains prayers for COP3 and calls on leaders to support the AOSIS protocol. Copies are available from members of the WCC delegation.