

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Chen Chimutengwende  
Minister of Information, Posts and Telecommunications, Zimbabwe**

**and**

**President of the Conference of the Parties to the  
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
at its second session**

**to the Conference of the Parties at its third session**

**Kyoto, 1 December 1997**

Your Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the third session of the Conference of the Parties. I would like to take this opportunity at the outset of my remarks to thank the Government of Japan for the excellent facilities placed at the disposal of this Conference.

I recognise the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, H.E. Mr. Keizo Obuchi, the Governor of the Prefecture of Kyoto, Mr. Teiichi Aramaki, and the Mayor of Kyoto, Mr. Yorikane Masumoto. I also recognise the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Ms. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, and the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC secretariat, Mr. Michael Zammit Cutajar.

Since we last met in July 1996, much has transpired in relation to the Convention. In broad terms, the placement of the climate change issue on the international agenda has grown more and more secure. This is evidenced by the attention paid to climate change in a number of international gatherings, including the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Group of Seven meeting in Denver, and the General Assembly's special session to review and appraise the implementation of Agenda 21 and in many other fora throughout the world in both developed and developing countries. Credence to the fact that the issues for which we are meeting here in Kyoto are very high on the global agenda is also lent by the increased media coverage of climate change-related issues worldwide- particularly events related to the smog in Indonesia and the El Nino phenomenon. Furthermore, here at Kyoto, there is record attendance at this current session of the Conference of the Parties.

The Convention process itself has also made considerable progress on a variety of issues, mainly through the four sessions of subsidiary bodies that have been convened since the last Conference of the Parties. The Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) has guided the review

process of first and second national communications from Annex I Parties, undertaken a review of the financial mechanism of the Convention, and agreed to recommend a programme budget for the coming biennium. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) has further defined its co-operation with other relevant international organizations, in particular, the important scientific assessments undertaken by the WMO/UNEP\*, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). SBSTA agreed upon a uniform reporting format for activities implemented jointly, and elaborated a programme of work on methodological issues. The Ad Hoc Group on Article 13 has considered proposals from several Parties on a multilateral consultative process, and has moved much closer to concluding its work. However, this Subsidiary Group requires more time to complete its work before COP 4. The Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate, facing the toughest task allocated to a subsidiary body, has moved from a series of individual Party proposals for a protocol or another legal instrument, through to a compilation text, and ultimately to a negotiating text - prepared by the Chairman. While you must give careful consideration during this session to the work and recommendations of all of these bodies, it is the product of the AGBM that will undoubtedly consume the greatest portion of your time and energy. The goal of adopting a protocol or another legal instrument during the next ten days stands before you as our greatest challenge.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the Chairs and Bureaus of the four Subsidiary Groups for work well done.

During the intersessional period between COP 2 and today, work has taken place in relation to a number of additional issues. One such issue is the Rules of Procedure. I have held consultations on these Rules in Nairobi during the special session of the UNEP Governing Council, during the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in New York, and, most recently, during the July-August and October sessions of the subsidiary bodies in Bonn. Document FCCC/CP/1997/5 contains the results of my consultations, along with a proposal on how the Conference may wish to proceed. The basic premise of the proposal, which came out of my Bureau, is that the Conference adopt the rules of procedure with the exception of Rule 22, paragraph 1, and Rule 42, paragraph 1, on the understanding that Rule 42, paragraph 1 will be the subject of continued consultations, and that Rule 22, paragraph 1 will continue to be applied. This proposal is reflected in the draft decision included as an annex to the document. Rather than continuing to apply the draft rules ad infinitum, -- we should move on towards adoption, and then concentrate on resolving the two outstanding issues. I hope that all of the Parties present here today will give my successor their full cooperation in resolving this situation.

Another issue which has been advanced during the inter-sessional period is the election of the next Bureau. I took advantage of my presence in Bonn during the last subsidiary body meetings to consult with regional coordinators on this matter. I am pleased to confirm that most of the positions, including the Chair of the Committee of the Whole, have been spoken for and I hope the other slots will be filled soon. Learning from past experience, the incoming President of COP3 will need the support of a Bureau as this will contribute to the smooth-running of the session, and facilitate the smooth-functioning of the entire Convention process.

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\* World Meteorological Organization, United Nations Environmental Programme



Distinguished delegates,

I would have erred in my duties if I fail to share with you some of my personal views on this process. The whole world is looking up to us for guidance and anxiously awaiting the outcome of this Conference.

Climate change threatens each and every individual nation in the world. Global warming is already occurring, as is evidenced by recurrent droughts, floods, pests and diseases. The El Nino of 1997 alone, being the most well monitored and severe on record, makes us wonder if there is a linkage with global warming. Our climate system may well be taking an irreversible path unless we act now.

We may not be in a position to escape from the impacts of climate change. We therefore must work together to mitigate climate change and undertake feasible response measures. However, our ability to shoulder such responsibilities differs considerably between developed and developing countries. While loss of life, destruction of property and services affects all nations, the impact is more severe in developing countries which are least able to cope. The IPCC Special Report on Regional Impacts concluded that Africa is the continent which is most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and water is the single resource that would be most negatively affected. There is clear evidence that many regions will not stand to benefit from climate change. We therefore face an immediate political dilemma of apportioning responsibility for the historical burden that humanity has placed on itself. Industrialized nations have indirectly placed burdens on all of us and therefore must take the first bold steps to mitigate climate change. The world is calling for leadership in meeting existing obligations; leadership in reduction of emissions; and leadership in alleviating human suffering caused by climate change. This is a question of survival for small Island States and other low lying areas of the world and for vulnerable communities in other poor countries.

The proposals to limit or reduce climate change that are currently on the table fall far short of those proposals put forward by the scientific community. As a result, developing country Parties may indeed have the legitimate right to demand for other stringent measures to respond to the impacts of climate change. Indeed, there may be calls for more deliberate programmes aimed at jump starting developing country Party economies to put them on a more sustainable pathway. Parties must acknowledge what developing countries already are doing domestically, with limited resources, to attain sustainable economic development. It will not be possible for these countries to take on new commitments under the new instrument but they will continue to advance implementation of their existing commitments.

Since 1990, emissions from developed country Parties have continued to rise. Consequently, without a legally binding agreement emissions could rise to dangerous and possibly irreversible levels. On the other hand, a low target such as calling for stabilisation, for whatever consideration, could imply that use of fossil fuel by developing countries would also need to be limited. This then brings me to the issue of equity.

I urge that in your deliberations over the next ten days, inter-generational and intra-

generational equity considerations be central to these discussions. Before we even think of binding measures for Parties other than those under Annex 1, the following must be agreed upon;

- \* a fair system of apportionment of emission limits,
- \* a globally agreed reduction pathway and,
- \* a projected sustainable future emission level on an equitable basis.

Further to this, there must be clear indications of reliable and predictable financial provisions to acquire and adapt sound technologies, know-how and production systems in developing countries.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It remains for me to thank the members of the COP2 Bureau and in particular the Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies for their cooperation during my term of office. It has been a very pleasurable experience to work with these distinguished colleagues from different parts of the world. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Africa Group and the Government of Zimbabwe for the honour bestowed on me as the President of COP 2. We look forward to remaining an active participant in the Convention process, and to helping to advance the goals of the Convention into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I wish also to extend my thanks and appreciation to the Executive Secretary, Michael Zammit Cutajar, and the rest of the secretariat staff for their continued support. I trust that the new President may look forward to receiving such assistance throughout the course of the coming year, and wish him the best of luck in his new position.

I trust that you will all work to make the meeting a success, and one that will go into the annals of international cooperation. Our deliberations within the next ten days are crucial to the long-term survival of humankind on the planet we all share, as well as to the promotion of sustainable development. If we fail, we would have lost precious time and golden opportunity to move further down the road to global sustainability. If we succeed in adopting a legal instrument which reflects the principles of equity, justice and fair play, the planet will be a better place for us, our children and grandchildren, and for generations to come. To achieve this, your negotiations must, of necessity, be conducted in good faith.

Finally, I would like to wish the incoming President and Bureau of COP3; the Executive Secretary; and his staff; all distinguished delegates; and representatives of NGOs here present, successful deliberations and outcome of this Conference.

I thank you.