

**SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER
OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM OF ZIMBABWE,
HONOURABLE F D NHEMA, TO THE SIXTH
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE UNITED
NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE
CHANGE**

**MR PRESIDENT,
HONOURABLE MINISTERS
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES**

Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment as the President of the Sixth Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. I wish to express confidence in your capable leadership in leading us to a successful conclusion of this important meeting. Also allow me to express my appreciation to the Kingdom of the Netherlands for the hospitality extended to us in this beautiful city of international justice.

The sixth Conference of the Parties (COP 6) brings enormous challenges associated with implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action as well as making strides towards the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. We are all aware that a lot of work and long

days and nights have been spent in coming up with present texts and that more work is required to reach the final agreement.

Unfortunately, as we engage in this theoretical battle, the climate continues to change and many people particularly in developing countries are suffering from the adverse impacts of climate change. This is why this conference of extreme urgency.

My country is concerned about climate change and its impacts on our water and forestry resources as well as agriculture production. In 1991/92, Zimbabwe experienced what was considered to be the worst drought in its living memory. Since Zimbabwe's economy is mainly agrarian-based, climate change will have irreversible impacts on the welfare of the people. We are therefore concerned that this process should come up with long-term actions that will achieve the objectives of the Convention.

The important issue that should guide this process is the need for developing countries to achieve sustained economic growth and eradication of poverty. This is the only way that our countries will improve the quality of lives of our populations and reduce their dependency on natural resources. In this regard, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should therefore be taken into full consideration. Developed countries should therefore assist developing ones to achieve sustainable development in the interest of a better planet. Furthermore, developed countries should strive to change from their current unsustainable modes of production and consumption patterns in order to reduce emissions. Of course, this calls for sacrifices. Nevertheless, these sacrifices are necessary in order to benefit posterity.

While the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol is important, we should not forget our commitments under the Convention. It is true that the majority of developed countries have failed to meet

their commitment to return to their 1990 level of emissions by year 2000 as enshrined in the Convention.

Developed countries have also committed themselves to take into full consideration needs and concerns of developing country Parties affected by the adverse impacts of climate change and of the implementation of response measures with regard to funding, technology transfer, capacity building and insurance among others. The fulfillment of these important commitments will not only enable developing countries to fulfill their commitments under the Convention in terms of Article 4.7, but also to raise the standard of living of their peoples. We are concerned that the implementation of these commitments has, unfortunately, fallen far short of expectations.

Of late, we have witnessed an increase in extreme weather events in the form of enhanced frequencies of floods, droughts, hurricanes in many parts of the globe. These events have demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt the vulnerability of

our countries to climate change and the lack of capacity to adapt. This emphasizes the urgency for Annex II countries to provide the requisite financial, technical and technological support to developing countries for capacity building and adaptation projects.

Vulnerability assessment and adaptation measures need to be considered as a priority for developing countries. The development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies is key to the future climate-friendly development of our countries. Capacity is very limited in our countries and we hope that the capacity building framework and the technology transfer strategy will be speedily adopted.

Mr. President, we realize the potential benefits that developing countries could be derive from the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). However, we are cognizant of the limitations of African countries to attract market-based financial flows. We therefore hope that this conference will adopt

provisions that will ensure equitable distribution of CDM projects. We also wish to indicate the need for institutional capacity building for CDM in Africa. I say this because Africa failed to benefit from the Activities Implemented Jointly (AIJ) pilot phase. This denied our countries the experience and capacity building benefits of implementing AIJ projects. We also wish to emphasize the importance of institutional capacity building for Africa to be an essential pre-requisite for the prompt start of CDM. Such support should include the establishment of CDM offices as an immediate priority.

Mr. President, one of the objectives of the CDM is to assist developing countries to achieve sustainable development. While each country should define what constitutes sustainable development in its jurisdiction there is need to define some generic criteria for sustainable development that will guide the Executive Board in validating CDM projects.

Mr. President, we understand that there are divergent views regarding the issue of inclusion of sinks in the CDM process. Zimbabwe has problems of deforestation and land degradation. Afforestation and reforestation are important aspects of our environmental interventions. However, the capacity of the land and natural resources to sustain our growing population is limited. Our current efforts are directed at removing the dependency of our people from the land and natural resources, which is the major cause of land degradation. Our future economic growth lies in industrialization. We therefore should direct future CDM projects into those sectors that will result in economic growth. Allowing sinks projects under CDM will result in investment being focused into relatively cheap forestry projects, which do not bring much capacity and technological benefits to developing countries.

Mr. President, I would like to conclude my contribution by urging all of us to act selflessly in the interest of our fragile planet. Our present actions should not prejudice the well being

of future generations. The outcome of our negotiations in this process should be such that posterity should not apportion blame on us for having not done what we ought to have done.

Mr. President,

I pledge my delegation's willingness to negotiate in good faith and call upon all countries to do the same for our common good.

Let me remind our colleagues in developed countries that while we are all in one ship. When this ship sinks we will not all

drown; some will be able to swim to safety. It is those who cannot swim that should be assisted so that they will not perish.

This requires goodwill on the part of those who can swim. I, therefore, urge all to take actions that will save the earth and its inhabitants.

I thank you Mr. President.