



**SIXTH CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK
CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (COP6)
THE HAGUE 13 - 24 NOVEMBER 2000**

**STATEMENT OF HON PETE HODGSON
LEADER OF THE NEW ZEALAND DELEGATION**

TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER

No one interested in the future of our planet and the people who inhabit it can doubt the significance of this Conference. What we agree here in the coming days will show a great deal about the vitality and viability of international co-operation. No subject seems better suited to such a demonstration of commitment than climate change. Few challenges facing the human family have such far reaching and global consequences.

At the opening session of this conference Dr Robert Watson, chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provided a compelling update on climate change trends. He showed conclusively that the challenges we face are real. As representatives of countries that have ratified the Framework Convention on Climate Change we are at this Conference to take the hard decisions needed to tackle the threat of climate change. It is essential that we show ourselves able to act.

Our task this week is to complete the Kyoto Protocol. Much complex negotiation has gone in to preparing the texts of decisions which will enable the Protocol to be operational. What is now needed in the remaining days of COP6 is for the necessary political commitment to be brought to bear. There must be goodwill and understanding. New Zealand stands ready to crunch difficult decisions and to show understanding for the needs and perspectives of others.

Early this year the New Zealand government announced that it aims to ratify the Kyoto Protocol in mid 2002, at the time of the Rio + 10 Summit. You will understand therefore that we are firmly committed to achieving a result at COP6 which makes that possible, not only for New Zealand but for all Annex 1 countries. We look to the earliest possible entry into force of the Protocol. The challenge of climate change demands that the first, tentative step which the commitments of the Protocol represent must be taken and taken as soon as possible. We have a long path to travel and the sooner we get started the better for us all.

For us to be able to support this Protocol we must be assured that it has strong environmental integrity. We are firmly committed to action under it which results in real limitations of greenhouse gas emissions. For us the solutions will come in the form of new technologies rather than by burdening our economy with distortionary costs. Economic development must be maintained and encouraged. Only then will we have ensured that the Protocol can be assured of existence beyond the early commitment periods. In short, the environmental goals of the Protocol will only be achieved if its economic viability is assured.

Time does not allow me to outline either the challenges or the opportunities that lie before us as we work to meet our Protocol commitments. Suffice it to say that we have started rather later than some to take action within our own country. We have however made a strong start and we are determined to make good progress fast. Much can and will be done domestically to fulfil our Protocol obligations. I am pleased to be able to make that commitment here. What I ask in return is an understanding that what might work well in some or many Annex 1 countries is unlikely to suit everyone. One size never fits everyone and I am

always suspicious of those who suggest it should. Please don't seek to impose an arbitrary limit on what we must do domestically. We see it as unnecessary and unhelpful.

We have travelled to The Hague to negotiate the rule book. We need rules that deliver gains to the atmosphere and which exclude agendas that weaken or which are a pretence. We need rules on monitoring, reporting, review, compliance and liability that work and that people trust. We need rules that are simple, clear, easy to follow and hard to break. That is how we will ensure the utmost environmental integrity.

It is also vital that we agree on arrangements which enable the mechanisms to operate as openly and freely as possible. Let us avoid the temptation to over engineer them, to allow distortions to hide the true costs of our actions. Let us particularly ensure an early start to the Clean Development Mechanism. This offers considerable opportunity in many countries and deserves to be encouraged. We are attracted to suggestions that priority could be given to smaller projects as part of a prompt start for the CDM. It is also most important that there be a good geographical spread of CDM projects. One further aspect of the CDM debate warrants a clear response: New Zealand does not support the inclusion of any nuclear project within the CDM process.

The issue of sinks within the Protocol is of central importance to us as it is to many participants here. It is vital to the credibility of this Conference and to the viability of the Protocol that we ensure we take decisions about sinks that have environmental integrity. We are prepared to work closely and co-operatively with others on this key challenge.

Climate change is a global challenge. It impacts on the lives of all. Many who have contributed little, if at all, to the causes of climate change are bearing the brunt of its impacts. Climate change matters to New Zealand. We are a small economy defending a very long coastline. Although our economy is quickly transforming at its heart lies an ability to use an even and reliable climate to grow things well. Although we are a western nation, we are also a Polynesian nation. New Zealanders have friends and relatives who live on coral atolls less than two metres high. So you will understand why we view this issue as serious and urgent.

COP6 is all about finalising the details of the Protocol, all about making it ratifiable. New Zealand is committed to working with all Parties to achieve this essential goal.