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**Adress by Prime Minister Wim Kok at the sixth Conference of Parties to
the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
(The Hague, the Netherlands, 20 November 2000)**

Your Majesty, President Chirac, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour and a pleasure be with you and to welcome you at this sixth Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, here in The Hague. This is the start of the second half of the conference, the start of a week of crucial importance.

The state of the world's weather and climate matters to us all. It affects the lives of everyone on earth. In developed and developing countries. In North and South, in East and West. Climate change affects us all and has a wide range of consequences for our daily lives. It has implications for the sea level, ecosystems and biodiversity, nature and agriculture, the environment, the economy and human well-being and health.

Developing countries will bear the brunt of the impact, exacerbating existing problems of poverty and reducing options for sustainable development. But industrialised countries are also under threat from rising sea levels, flooding, expanding deserts and faltering ecosystems. Speaking of material loss, there is a lot to lose. More important: every living being in this world deserves common and equal protection.

Domestic action in industrialised countries to further implement emission reductions is imperative and should be effective and timely. Policy changes are needed, also to make production and consumption patterns in the industrialised countries more compatible with the requirements of sustainable development. These policy changes are ongoing, but need to be sustained and discussed internationally. In The Netherlands we will introduce further changes in fiscal policy next year in order to contribute also in this way.

Globalisation has really changed our world. International trade, travel, communications have all become easier. National economies have become much more interdependent. Globalisation is about opportunities and about risks, economically, socially and for the environment. Not all countries are able to reap the benefits of the global economy we see emerge more and more. The communication revolution plays an important role here; it should help us share information and knowledge for our common benefit, also in the field of Climate Change. We need to look at global governance issues connected to globalisation and sustainable development. The Climate Change Conference is very much about that, when looking at options for regulation and monitoring, with compliance and liability regimes and mechanisms for emission reduction.

At the United Nations' Millennium Summit in New York last September, world leaders discussed among others how to tackle global environmental problems. They rounded off this special meeting by signing the 'United Nations Millennium Declaration'.

Let me quote two passages from the Declaration.

Firstly: *'The central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalisation becomes a positive force for all the world's people. For while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed.'* The Declaration calls for global policies and measures, addressing the needs of developing countries and economies in transition.

Secondly: *'We must spare no effort to free all of humanity from the threat of living on a planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities. We resolve therefore to adopt a new ethic of conservation and stewardship.'* The Declaration encourages better management, conservation and sustainable development of forests and sustainable use of water resources. It also presses for the full implementation of conventions on biological diversity and desertification.

The Millennium Summit, undertook to make every effort *'to ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, preferably by the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 2002'*. In this context it is very encouraging indeed to see that a number of developing countries have already launched national climate policies or are taking actions to do so. The commitment of the Small Island and Developing States is most laudable in this respect.

Domestic policies, including concrete action, both nationally and abroad, are now in place in The Netherlands. Half of our emission reduction target of minus 6% will be achieved at home, the other half through the Kyoto mechanisms. Results will be monitored continuously to ensure we remain on the right track and to adjust when necessary.

I am pleased to announce that the Dutch parliament has already embarked on the ratification process.

Our policy makes full use of market-based instruments such as taxes, tax relief and covenants. And we are not only taking measures to achieve our reduction target of six per cent. We are also preparing for the future with a package of innovative measures. For instance, we are studying the possibility of emissions trading within the Netherlands, and exploring technological innovations, such as energy from hydrogen.

As I said, we intend to meet the other half of our greenhouse gas reduction target with the help of the Kyoto mechanisms. Our budgets for the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation are substantial and continue to grow. As a matter of fact, we have already launched a Joint Implementation programme, which has attracted a lot of interest from the

private sector. We have already gained some experience with the trade in emission permits with other countries.

Our international development co-operation policies and efforts will be further tuned with the Climate Change Convention. Climate change has demonstrated negative effects on poverty and sustainable development, the core of development co-operation. We support the needs of developing countries and will commit a total amount of 200 million Dutch Guilders for the purpose of adaptation measures as well as for capacity building in developing countries and for related activities.

There are reasons for serious concern about the fate of our planet. International environmental negotiations seem to be an uphill battle. In all countries we feel the same tension between the economy and the environment. Most people do their utmost for economic growth, prosperity, education and so on. However, we must be equally aware of our responsibility for the protection of the environment; the results for economy and environment must be and must remain in balance.

Eight years ago, at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the international community laid down principles for the sustainable management of forests. Earlier this year, at the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests held in New York, a number of countries tried to convert these principles and proposals for action into a forest convention. They didn't succeed. We now have to ask ourselves whether the political will really exists to save the forests – the lungs of our planet.

The biodiversity convention was also signed in Rio. It has now entered into force, but has not yet been ratified by all countries. It does not make any clear commitments, so certain biodiversity issues are now being worked out in greater detail. Biosafety, for example. Earlier this year, the talks on the Cartagena Protocol on biosafety were completed successfully. So it is possible, success in environmental diplomacy. It has to be achieved again. In The Hague in 2002, a strategic plan can be adopted to enhance the effectiveness of the biodiversity convention.

In March this year there were talks on persistent organic pollutants, or POPs. At the end of the talks, the passages on technical and financial assistance were under heavy debate. You, as seasoned negotiators, will know what that means. It is essential that the POP negotiations in Johannesburg later this year will result in a tangible agreement.

Here in The Hague, it is our responsibility to conduct talks on climate change. The eyes of the world are upon us. So I would encourage you to 'Work it out!'. Let us show that international partnership can tackle environmental issues. World leaders can really solve the problems we face. We can turn the tide of scepticism. The motto of one of our famous Dutch football clubs is: 'Actions speak louder than words'. We can provide solutions. But we will need to build bridges.

Let me go back to the issue of this week: CoP6. A worldwide package deal is needed. It should contain among others:

- finding new patterns of production and consumption in industrialised countries;
- accelerate technological innovation in developing countries;
- creating an international market for greenhouse gas emission permits, with plenty of business opportunities;
- assisting developing countries with capacity building, adaptation and with accelerating technological innovation in energy services;
- giving preferential treatment to the Least Developed Countries in the financial mechanisms of the Convention; and
- consistency with the conventions on desertification and biodiversity. I am happy to welcome the President of the Biodiversity Convention, minister Njenze from Kenya, in our midst this week!

Some important results of the first week are:

- There is a focus on the Kyoto Protocol and no longer on sensitive external issues
- All groups have shown flexibility, both on substance and on working methods. Especially notable are complementarity, Kyoto mechanisms, sinks, liability and sincere willingness to address the concerns of developing countries

Your Majesty, President Chirac, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Whatever will be decided this week, it should be environmentally credible. That's what we are here to do: to fight climate change. We should not leave this conference without adequate and substantial assistance to developing country Parties. They will be the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. They are the most in need of financial and technological support for adaptation. Our discussions must not be dominated by institutional obstacles.

We must focus on the needs of our generation and of course the needs of future generations, our children and grandchildren. Everywhere in the world. Let's work it out!
Thank you for your kind attention.

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The eyes of the world are on the World Conference on Climate Change. World leaders are here to move forward to substantiate our common but differentiated responsibility for sustainable development. Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and implementation of the Climate Change Convention are crucial in order to achieve a breakthrough in our shared approach to the issues at stake.

Effective and timely domestic action in the industrialized countries and effective and timely support to the developing countries, confronted most with the adverse effects of climate change, must be at the core of the results to be achieved this week: Let us all work together to achieve this in the forthcoming negotiations!.

The Dutch parliament has already embarked on the ratification process. The government regards the position of developing countries as a critical element of the negotiations. It is therefore prepared to spend an amount of 200 million guilders on climate change assistance and adaptation, and hopes others will follow its lead.