

REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA
STATEMENT OF Mrs. FAIZA KEFI
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT and LAND USE PLANNING

THE 6th CONFERENCE OF PARTIES
TO THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

THE HAGUE, 20 NOVEMBER 2000

IN THE NAME OF GOD THE MERCIFUL AND THE CLEMNT,

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the beginning to express my thanks and esteem for the hospitality that I and my country's delegation have received and for the good organization of the Sixth Conference of the Contracting Parties.

I am pleased to address to you and your assistants my thanks and congratulations for the good management of the proceedings of this special and vital conference.

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the Hague and we are hopeful to reach a consensus on the standing issues that we negotiated within the framework of 'Buenos Aires Action Plan' with a view to opening the way to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and protecting mankind from the impact of climate change and the repercussions of global warming.

Last week, Tunisia hosted the Sixth Meeting of the Mediterranean Commission for Sustainable Development where concerns about climate change were at the forefront of the recommendations of Tunis Declaration and the action proposals relating to sustainable development.

The fate of the earth and its peoples resulting from the deteriorating environmental balance is dependent on the decision-makers' concern in considering the environment a human right and a fundamental agenda item. Thanks to a constant political will, my country endeavors to give the environment the position it deserves in development plans and considers sustainable development as one of the most important concerns in facing up the challenges of the 21st, century. The aim is to meet the requirements of the present, fulfill future generation' expectations and consecrate the principles of a balanced and total development.

Tunisia signed Rio de Janeiro Convention in 1992 and ratified it in 1993. Climate Change has been seriously considered in spite of the prevailing uncertainty and the fact that research hypotheses always entail an element of probability.

On the basis of the principle of caution, we endeavor to honor our commitment among developing countries to prepare our National Declaration with the support of the Global Environment Facility. Our approach is based on consultation and the participation of all active and effective forces such as administrative structures, socio-economic partners, associations, research institutions, within the framework of a national participatory dialogue to enrich the Declaration, which is undergoing the final touches.

Within the framework of our national environment protection strategy, we fight against all forms of pollution, rationalize energy use and promote environment friendly technologies, hoping for more support from countries with more experience and expertise.

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The commitment of the Contracting Parties responsible for greenhouse effect gas emissions is an absolute necessity. The implementation of such commitment in accordance with Kyoto Protocol is confirmed more than ever in light of the forecasts and through the dialogue whose foundations we have laid in Rio de Janeiro, Kyoto, Buenos Aires and finally the Hague.

My country affirms that no other commitments can be imposed on developing countries and the least developed ones because they are not responsible for greenhouse effect gas emissions and given that they are threatened by climate change repercussions such as sea level rise, deteriorating desertification, increased surface water evaporation, food security disturbance and therefore more fragile natural resources. This may impede the development of these countries.

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The collective and differentiated responsibility in confronting climate change remains one of our unswerving principles. However, the developing countries' need for the required capabilities, skills and technologies, and the policies and strategies to confront this phenomenon has become urgent and necessary. We hope that the industrial countries, which have a long experience, support developing countries within the framework of an effective cooperation and a partnership in solidarity.

Today, our ambition is to reach a consensus on Kyoto mechanisms, operation mode and implementation. We support strengthening and implementing the clean development mechanisms as soon as possible to consolidate sustainable development in developing countries.

We call for the need to consider the relationship between climate change repercussions, desertification and water scarcity in our region. Such repercussions destabilize food and water security. Hence, the need for deepening our vision through regional prospective studies by expert teams on climate change with a view to reaching the best results and deciding on response and treatment measures.

We also call for more coordination between the Convention on Climate Change and the two conventions on desertification and bio-diversity. On this issue, we suggest the creation of a working group within the framework of the Convention to further consider the interdependence between climate change, on the one hand, and deteriorating desertification and bio-diversity reduction, on the other.

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The organization of this conference as agreed in Buenos Aires in 1998 puts the Contracting Parties in the face of a major challenge to overcome obstacles and differences for the sake of 'the continuation of life on earth'. Our success in facing such challenge is tantamount to our efforts in achieving a real progress in our negotiations and observing the provisions of the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

My country, whose vision towards Kyoto Protocol mechanism is in harmony with that of the African group and the Group 77/China, reaffirms the need for the industrial countries to satisfy their commitments and realize demonstrable progress in the GHG reduction.

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This conference crowns a series of contacts, consultations, and relentless and complex efforts to achieve a greater clarity in the Parties' various approaches. The Parties' interest in pursuing the movement confirms the credibility and the determination to identify a common ground of understanding on the basis of the Convention's principles and the results of Kyoto Conference. However, our speedy reaction to achieve the expected positive results is the essential element in this advance. We hope to win over the challenges before it is too late.

Finally, I reiterate my thanks to you, the Secretariat and the conference organizers. I also thank the interpreters for their excellent work.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.