

UNFCCC CoP 6+ : Bonn 2001  
Youth Statement to Plenary, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> July

To be delivered by Shaun Nixon (UK) and Fatoumatta Ndure (Gambia)

Good afternoon ladies, gentlemen, youth delegates and those who still feel young on the inside,

We, young people from all corners of the world, have been holding a week-long Youth Meeting, thanks to the efforts of National Delegations, the Conference President and his Dutch Youth Team. Our being together, coupled with a high degree of continuity from The Hague, has allowed us to have many in-depth discussions throughout the week. We would like to take this opportunity to convey our thoughts to you and deliver what we consider to be our most important messages, in the hope that you will at least consider **our** views when deciding **our** future in these negotiations.

As you all know, sinks are a controversial and complex issue. For the sake of our futures, we appeal to all parties: don't include sinks in Kyoto to a greater degree than they are already and establish regulations to ensure environmental integrity, effective maintenance and long-term sustainability are paramount. Remember why UNFCCC was initiated at Rio – the need to create a sustainable society for both present and future generations.

For Kyoto mechanisms, we support the proposal that parties must reach at least half of their emission reduction targets in their own countries. We also feel it is common sense that nuclear and large-scale hydro power projects must be excluded and actively discouraged. They do not represent viable long-term solutions and will merely create major problems for us in the not-too-distant future. Waste disposal, vulnerability to accidents and widespread disruption of drainage patterns to name but a few.

Compliance initiatives must be fair and effective. Their exact format is not important – certainly not as important as reducing emissions.

In discussions about developing countries, we identified that the biggest obstacle to successful implementation of climate change initiatives in developing countries is monetary. Without funds to finance projects such as awareness campaigns, governments cannot keep people informed and educated about environmental changes in the coming decades. Financial aid from the richer nations is one of the most valuable solutions for the problems of developing countries.

We support the process of technology transfer from developed regions to less developed. However, it must be ensured that the latter do not become dependent on the former, effectively returning the world to the days of colonialism. Rather, it is felt that instruction for manufacture should accompany the technologies being transferred.

There is also a danger that richer nations will 'use and abuse' developing nations in order to reduce their Protocol compliance costs. Therefore, we suggest the introduction of limitations on Annex I countries, to prevent them creating a monopoly on cheaper projects in developing countries before the 2<sup>nd</sup> commitment period even begins.

What are our expectations for the future? We feel there is a need to guarantee increasing youth participation in future CoPs, not only in the conferences themselves or in separate youth meetings, but most importantly in parties' discussions. Young people around the world have viable and attractive ideas about preventing climate change, but most of the time, due to a lack of opportunity, they end up not contributing to the process. They are eager and more than capable of learning about the issues and negotiations and they possess tremendous enthusiasm for anything which makes sense and is good in their eyes for our future.

On the subject of making other young people understand climate change, we have met with a plethora of difficulties since The Hague. Age restrictions, legislation, logistics, financial limitations and a lack of support have hampered our efforts to increase awareness and understanding among the younger generation. We hope to resolve some of these difficulties as quickly as possible, hopefully with the help of UNFCCC.

Despite the setbacks and limitations we have experienced, since The Hague we have achieved a great deal. The World Youth Organisation on Climate Change is reaching out to ever increasing numbers of young people, its members are collecting and distributing more and more information and projects from assemblies and school groups to tree planting and recycling are happening the world over.

Ultimately, we look forward to the day when respect for the environment and the need to develop sustainable ways of life become more important than the short-term, out of date principles that got us into this mess. We would like to see that day go down in the history books as being in July 2001, and there is only one group of people who can make that all-important decision... at CoP 6 we have been extremely disappointed about your disregard for our future. Don't let us down. Those history books may never forgive you.