

**STATEMENT BY THE GROUP OF 77 AND
CHINA**

TO

**THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK
CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY, SANI ZANGON DAURA,
HONOURABLE MINISTER OF
ENVIRONMENT OF THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

AND

**CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND
CHINA**

AT

**THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS
21 NOVEMBER 2000**

Mr President, Distinguished Ministers and Representatives of the Parties, Observers to the Convention, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I take the floor in the name of the estimated 3.4 billion peoples of the South, spread across continents of Africa, Asia and Latin America as well as the Islands of the Oceania, from Lima to Manila; from Beijing to Rio; from Cape to Cairo, bound together by the shackles of poverty, deprivation and underdevelopment.

Mr President, forty percent of the inhabitants of the South, fondly referred to as the Group of 77 and China since 1964, are today living on less than one United States dollar per day. When you raise the figure to two United States dollars, the corresponding figure jumps to near 60%.

Mr President as we speak today an approximate 300 million children are starving not in Europe, or North America – but in the developing countries of the South.

The World Bank says that the majority of African countries are worse off today than they were in the 1960s – the decade of independence. Sub-Saharan' Africas' total income is not much more than Belgium's, and is divided among 48 countries with a median GDP of just over two billion dollars – about the output of a town of 60,000 in a rich country of the North. Nearly half the continent's people live below the poverty line. Excluding South Africa, the continent has fewer roads than Poland.

Less than one in five Africans have access to electricity, two thirds of rural people have no adequate water supplies and three quarters live without proper sanitation.

Mr President, dear colleagues, the story only differs in degrees when we switch to the rest of the South.

It is no longer news that the poor countries of the South are already being impacted by climate change and will be further impacted by the response measures of the rich countries of the North. It is no longer news that we are the most vulnerable – the weakest link. It is also a fact that we do not have the capacity to act, while you seem too lack the will.

Mr President it was precisely because of these facts that the convention provides in Article 4.7 and I quote –

“The extent to which developing country parties will effectively implement their commitments under the convention will depend on the effective implementation by developed country parties of their commitments under the convention related to financial resources and transfer of technology and will take fully into account that economic and social development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of the developing country parties.”

Mr president, in the same convention, in Article 3.1, all parties are asked to fulfill their obligations towards protecting the climate system “on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.”

Mr President, we the poor peoples of the South, who are neither responsible for global warming, nor are we capable of adapting, are asking of the rich nations of the North to fulfill their own convention obligations to us. These are legitimate demands. The time for platitudes and rhetorics are over. We’ve heard yesterday from our distinguished guests – the urgency of the matter, – its time for action.

Mr President, we are often reminded that The Hague is synonymous with "Justice". In my statement last Monday to Plenary, I tried to define "Justice" in the context of climate change.

I asked then Q. What is Justice? The simple answer is that justice is EQUITY.

Q. What does that mean in the context of the international effort to deal with potential climate change?

Q. In practice have we achieved justice or equity, within the contemplation of the convention we adopted more than eight years ago?

Q. What must we do to assume that, in the years ahead, COP 6 will provide for Justice or equity, under both the convention and the Kyoto protocol?

Mr President the answers to these posers are all found in the same statement of basic principle we referred to above and in the rest of Article 3 of the convention.

It would serve no purpose to dwell again into the various contentious issues also referred by your good self as the "crunch issues" in this statement. Q. Why? Simply because as President Chirac put it so eloquently yesterday and I quote –

"Despite the commitments entered into, despite Buenos Aires two years ago and Lyons just a few weeks ago, everyone has stuck to their positions and their own interests. Everyone is waiting for someone else to make the first move."

Mr President, we are playing the game of chess with our common heritage and the future of mankind. This is clearly demonstrated in the sea of square brackets round the texts forwarded to us, which are threatening to sink the entire conference of the parties.

However, the Group remains consoled with the fact that we have in you, Mr president, an able, tested, experienced and committed citizen of the world, who we believe is capable of navigating us through the sea of square brackets threatening all of us to a successful conclusion of this conference of the parties.

Mr President the Group has demonstrated from day one of this conference that we are here for success – that we are prepared to play our own part in ensuring this success and that we are solidly behind you as our president.

Mr President the Group has conveyed to you at several meetings our great concern with some procedural issues. The requirement of full participation of parties, transparency and openness in our work is critical.

At the twelfth session of the subsidiary bodies, in Bonn and just last week here in The Hague, the Group stated, and we repeat now “consultations must not be converted into negotiations that involve only a select number of parties. The Group of 77 and China consist of 134 sovereign nations. On behalf of all of them, we must insist on a reservation for each of them at the negotiating table, which is properly set in the meeting rooms of the SBI and the SBSTA, the various contact groups and the conference of the parties itself!!

Mr President, the critical issues of the developing country parties – Development and transfer of technology, Capacity Building, Financial issues, issues of impact of climate change and response measures, the CDM, among others are lagging

far behind other issues – which are also important to the ratification of the protocol. The Group demands that for fairness and equity, we start addressing these issues today and not any later in the week! The Buenos Aires plan of action calls for a comprehensive and balanced approach and outcome of the issues under consideration. We the developing countries are asking for no less.

Finally Mr President, we wish you all the best in the difficult days ahead. Together we can work it out!