

Statement by His Highness Prince Fahd Ibn Abdullah
Assistant Minister of Defense
InspectorGeneral of Civil Aviation
Head of the Delegation
Of
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
To
UNFCCC/COP3

Mr. President;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It gives me great pleasure to address this august assembly of nations on an issue of such importance to the future of our planet, this hospitable home of present and future generations. Allow me also to extend our thanks to the government and people of Japan for hosting, and meticulously organizing this conference. I would also like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election, and wish you and your colleagues success in your endeavors.

The actual situation and facts make it incumbent upon us, we the people of the world, to work together to translate the UNFCCC into formulas that can be implemented. By so doing, we can collectively reap the benefits of the international efforts that were crowned by the convening of the Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro in 1992. As you are well aware, climate change is a priority topic among issues related to environment and development. Environmental issues can no longer be dissociated from development. They are considered a part and parcel of them, and they constitute a precondition for the sustainability and success of development endeavors.

There is no doubt that the flawed and irrational approaches of past development policies pursued in the developed countries were the major cause of the environmental problems of today. These countries failed to regard the environment as an economic resource that must be rationally utilized.

We therefore believe that attempts to commit the developing countries to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases will adversely affect their growth rates. It must be recalled here that the priorities of developing countries are mainly centered on eradicating poverty, providing their population with the minimum standards of living, and addressing many national and regional environmental problems. Therefore engaging the developing countries in efforts to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases will also compromise their right to develop, and reach the same level of progress attained by developed nations. This means that the gap between the developed and developing countries will continue to exist.

It is therefore fair of the UNFCCC to demand in its provisions that the

developed countries play a leading role, and shoulder their responsibilities by allowing the developing countries to pursue their development goals, with due regard given to the fundamental principles of sustainable development.

Mr. President;

Developing countries whose economies depend on fossil fuel will be affected twice: by the adverse effects of climate change and by measures and policies pursued by developed countries to counter this phenomenon. Developed countries are therefore called upon to compensate the developing countries for any damage they would sustain in the course of the process.

We in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia concur with the countries of the world on the need to coordinate our efforts to counter the adverse effects of climate change. We fully endorse the position of the developing countries on the need to comply with the provisions of the convention and the Berlin Mandate. No new commitments must be imposed on the developing countries. The instrument that would be prepared must be comprehensive, in that it must include all greenhouse gases in all economic sectors, their emissions by sources and removal by sinks. Moreover, response measures and actions taken to adapt to climate change must be comprehensive too.

In our position, we in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are guided by our concern to safeguard the interests of developing countries and our own. We underscore the special importance of the question of eliminating subsidies and tax incentives extended to some emission sources in the developed countries, and correcting the tax systems to reflect accurately the carbon level of fossil fuels. Levying additional taxes on an already heavily taxed oil is prejudicial, and must be therefore avoided by all means. The Kingdom expects the developed countries to strike a balance between policies already in force to limit their consumption of products proven to be sources of greenhouse gas emissions on one hand, and the policies that must be adopted to limit the production of these sources on the other. We should be vigilant not to compromise the principles of free trade while introducing restrictions and measures that could, if adopted adversely affect the free flow of international trade.

We also believe that the developing countries are justified in not accepting some of the principles that were proposed, which are outside the context of the Berlin Mandate. By this I am referring to the question of trading emissions which mean transferring international commitments into business deals. This too is incompatible with the Berlin Mandate.

On the subject of joint implementation of programs we believe that the parties should await the completion and objective assessment of the results of this experimental stage which would come to an end by the year 2000.

Mr. President;

In conclusion, allow me to say that states should by all means avoid making this conference a framework for the pursuit of national economic interests at the expense of the developing countries. This environmental forum must not become a smoke screen behind which hidden agendas are pursued.

We believe that solutions to achieve systematic growth rates for the world economy while reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases do exist. This approach will allow economic and environmental gains to go in tandem. We believe that the option of technology remains the best viable option. Therefore, developed countries must shoulder their responsibilities under the convention with regard to environmentally safe technologies.

It is unfortunate to use the developmental needs of the developing countries as a tool to try and break the unity of their objectives as represented in the demands of the G-77 and China in this Conference. It is therefore important to find the common grounds of understanding among the developed and developing countries so that the objectives of the conference could be realized.

Thank you for your attention, and I wish you the best in bringing this conference to a successful conclusion.

May God's peace be upon you.