

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. PANANGIAN SIREGAR
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CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA

**BEFORE THE FOURTH CONFERENCE OF THE
PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK
CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

BUENOS AIRES, 12 NOVEMBER 1998

Madame President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. This Conference is a source of pride for the Group, since it is hosted for the first time by a valued member of the Group, Argentina. It is also a profound pleasure for the Group to see you presiding over this important Conference.

We meet, Madame, at a time where new environmental studies show that global warming is increasing at a much faster rate than even the most pessimistic prediction of a decade ago. Ever since the world began keeping systematic records in the 1860s, this year has been marked as the hottest with various serious social and economic repercussions occurred in many parts of the world. The changing patterns of temperature and rainfall have strengthened the view that human activities have already altered global climate. Given the dire consequences for all countries, we cannot afford to ignore any longer the perilous implications of global warming. And, indeed, while we were negotiating in this Conference, we learned with deep sadness the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in Central America. The Group of 77 and China fully support the call to the international community to urgently lend immediate assistance to alleviate the anguish suffered by the peoples there.

It is only natural that the Group of 77 and China attach great importance to this Conference. Although being held annually, the Conference is too important to be approached with the attitude of business as usual. It is needless to emphasize that we cannot hope to prevent the world from its destructive course, unless we devise an effective system of global governance capable of mitigating climate change. And for such system to be effective and universally acceptable, it must have for its source of legitimacy the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. Thus, while we are deeply engaged in the process of establishing such governance, we must always be guided by the principles and commitments enshrined therein. Any decision of the Conference must conform to the two instruments.

In light of the persistent reiteration of disconcerting views expressed through the media, including in this Conference, it is pertinent to recall certain salient features of those principles and commitments of the Convention. According to the Convention, the reason for us to gather here in this beautiful city of "Good Air" is to review and to make the decisions necessary to promote the effective implementation of the Convention. Furthermore, the Convention explicitly states that the developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof by adopting effective national policies and measures with the aim of returning their anthropogenic emissions of greenhouses gases to the 1990 levels by the year 2000. This commitment of leadership is further elaborated in the Kyoto Protocol that by the year 2005, these countries

should have made demonstrable progress in ensuring that they do not exceed their quantified emissions limitation and reduction commitments.

On the part of the developing country Parties, the Convention also clearly states that 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 into account that economic and social development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of the developing country Parties. This is the basis of the Group to ensure that any mechanism to be put in place does not contain the seed of eroding the right to develop of developing countries.

These are the basic issues that this Conference has to address, and under these criteria, the international community will judge the sincere and the seriousness of our endeavour.

Madame President,

It has been argued that a study has shown that limitation and reduction of emissions by the developed country Parties alone will not be sufficient to combat climate change. Be as it may, our Group will be the last to be surprised. The Kyoto targets fall far short of what science has prescribed to avert serious climate change and way below the 20% target then proposed by the Group. Hence, that argument cannot be used to delay the implementation of legal commitments under the

Convention. First thing first, says the old adage, and the priority now is for the developed country Parties to implement their legal obligations through policies and concrete measures to reduce their greenhouse gas emission as specified by the Convention and Kyoto Protocol. Providing different direction or imposing extraneous requirement, especially by linking that requirement as conditionality to implement one's commitments, will only erode confidence, enhance uncertainty, and in turn jeopardize the whole process of our efforts to develop concrete measures to mitigate climate change.

Active leadership to prevent global warning has to come from developed country Parties. This premise is enshrined in the Convention. A strong commitment from these Parties should accelerate international progress on the threat of global warning. Developed country Parties must now reassure the international community of their seriousness in the implementation and strengthening of their commitments under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

Madame President,

This Conference is about to elapse and we have only two more days to complete our work. Indeed, now we are about to adopt a few decisions which will move us a step closer to render adequate the commitments of the Parties. Nevertheless, we have to be frank in our assessment of what have been achieved in this Conference so as to do justice to the international community which is already threatened by the adverse effects of climate change.

Through the review process of the national communications of the developed country Parties presented to the Conference, and the various independent analysis available outside this Plenary Hall, show that most may not be able to realize their quantified emission limitation or reduction commitment in accordance with the provision of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. It is relevant to keep in mind that although we can agree on a schedule to design the Kyoto "mechanism", domestic actions should provide the main means for meeting commitments to combat climate change. The mechanisms are important only as a supplement and on condition that their use is subject to strict rules of accountability and compliance. We do realize that efforts to stabilize atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases would require major efforts, in particular political courage and leadership. Nevertheless, fearing that if present trends are allowed to continue unchecked, eventual compliance with the Kyoto Protocol could be seriously hampered. It is for this sole reason that the Group of 77 and China propose a decision to be adopted by this Conference that firm guidelines be established, no later by the next Conference, to ensure compliance. In this connection we also propose the Conference to urge early ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

The Group of 77 and China stand ready to fulfil its share of responsibilities in our collective efforts to mitigate climate change. There is a great deal of evidence that many of us are taking steps to ensure that our greenhouse gas emissions are at a lesser rate than our economic growth as compare to the development path that were taken in the past by the developed countries. Nevertheless, the extent to

which we may be able to increase our participation in mitigating climate change depend, as the Convention stated, on the effective implementation of the developed country Parties of their commitments in the field of technology transfer and financial resources.

Regrettably, the result of our review in this Conference on Article 4 point 8 and 4 point 9, including in the efforts to establish the financial mechanism as called for by Article 11, show discouraging results. We are concerned with the lack of progress of issues that are very fundamental for the proper participation of developing countries in the global efforts to address climate change. It is also essential that this Conference initiates concrete steps and a schedule of actions for the implementation of the Articles of the Convention relating to the specific needs and concerns of developing countries arising from the adverse effects of climate change and the impact of response measures. The pertinent issues of funding and technology transfer as provided for under this Article must receive due attention here in Buenos Aires. They can no longer wait.

Bearing in mind that there are still hundreds of millions of human beings languishing in poverty in our part of the world, the Group calls on its developed partners to fulfil their commitment under the Convention by creating enabling policy in their respective countries to confront the continued difficulties encountered by the developing countries over the lack of progress in these important field of

financial and technology transfer.

Madame President,

May I just say by way of conclusion, we all live in the same and ever increasingly interdependent world. Our fate depends on how well we work as a team and in partnership to surmount this formidable challenge, the mitigation of climate change. We can only win in this struggle for survival only if all of us are relegated to realize our commitments under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

I thank you, Madame President.