

PARAGUAY

STATEMENT BY MR. MIGUEL ANGEL SOLANO LOPEZ C., AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF PARAGUAY TO JAPAN BEFORE THE THIRD SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE.

KYOTO, 8 DECEMBER 1997

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the people of the Republic of Paraguay, its President, its Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in the absence of a Ministry of the Environment, whose creation is now being debated in our Legislature, on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture, may I extend congratulations to Environment Minister Hiroshi Ohki of Japan on his election as Chairman of this Conference.

Thank you also to the Government and to the people of Japan for their extraordinary endeavors in organizing this Third Conference of the Parties, and for making us feel so welcome.

During the last few days, we have had the opportunity to appreciate the incredible beauty of Kyoto. This city is a most appropriate setting for our Conference, since it presents such tangible evidence of what can be accomplished by a people committed not only to preservation, but also to reconstruction when war and other calamities have wreaked destruction.

Perhaps we can all learn from this extraordinary example and proceed one step beyond the preservation and reconstruction of temples and shrines of such sheer beauty, to an equally strong commitment that we can apply to our fragile atmosphere.

Mr. Chairman, Paraguay is a small country. Its land mass is not large. Its population is not dense.

By any measurable standards, its greenhouse gas emissions are low. By any measurable standards, enhancement of its sinks, and therefore its positive contributions to the environment are high.

But this is not to say that the people of Paraguay have achieved a level of happiness. Large numbers of its population struggle to attain a reasonable level of income, within a sustainable framework of development, commensurate with a lifetime of effort.

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While we gather here to bring into clear focus the one problem which threatens to destroy our atmosphere, it is perhaps important not to overlook the fact that millions of people in Paraguay, as well as in many other corners of the world are burdened with a multiplicity of efforts, all exerted at the same time. Paraguay is struggling to consolidate its democracy. It is struggling to elevate the level of its economic development. It is utilizing technology imported from much more advanced countries. And at the same time, its people are being told that that technology is obsolete, that further efforts must be made, that the fruit of their efforts must once again be postponed.

And yet burdened as its people may be, Paraguay is still taking important steps to insure that it does not complicate the problem which so heavily weighs on all humankind.

Most of Paraguay's electricity is generated by renewable resources. Its public policy actively supports the enhancement of its sinks. Its reforestation legislation foments and encourages reforestation. Its public sector actions aim uniformly in that direction, with the private sector ever more closely identified with that same policy. In short, it is exerting efforts commensurate with its capacity.

Under these circumstances, Paraguay considers it improper, even unethical for far more developed nations to condition the fulfillment of their commitments to new burdens that will weigh on those people and countries least able to support them.

Leadership must be exercised by those most capable of leading the way. And such leadership must by its very nature be exercised by example, if strong, binding agreements are to be agreed upon and put into practice by people everywhere. Given the gaps between developed and developing countries, such leadership must also include broadly-based technology transfer tied to a mechanism that makes its use financially feasible.

Mr. Chairman, many times the people least able to understand the sophistications of modern technology, are the same ones who most clearly understand the damage that environmentally-threatening technology can suffer upon nature, for it is they who live closest to and in the greatest harmony with nature. It is they who most critically need the rains and other manifestations of predictable climate for their very survival and that of their families. Just as we do.

Paraguay is ready to do its part. No, not the bare minimum, but a generous part in accordance with the challenges that we, as humans face. Paraguay looks forward to departing from Kyoto with a commitment of which we can all be proud.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.