

OPENING OF COP 9



STATEMENT

OF

**HIS EXCELLENCY MR. T. R. BAALU,
PRESIDENT COP 8
&
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS,
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

AT

**MILAN
ITALY**

1ST DECEMBER, 2003

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

As President of the eighth Conference of the Parties, I welcome you all to the ninth Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in the city of Milan which has been on the confluence of knowledge, enterprise, wisdom, commerce and technology for many centuries and has produced some of the world's greatest thinkers, saints and artists. We have gathered here in this historic city, to discuss, deliberate and decide on various climate change issues under the Climate Convention.

Friends: A little more than a year ago, you placed great confidence in me when you called on me to serve as President of COP-8. This was a great challenge and thanks to the hard work and dedication of so many people, the intersessional time has been a remarkable period of progress and achievements. As we all know, COP-8 proved to be a highly important meeting in the life of this process. At COP-8, a number of important decisions on the institutions and procedures of the Kyoto Protocol were taken. The Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (the CDM) was made operational, three years of work on reporting and reviewing procedures was completed, and guidance was provided to the Global Environment Facility on the priorities for two new funds.

COP-8 also resulted in the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development. The Delhi Declaration accords high priority to adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change. It reiterates the importance of carrying out all existing international commitments under the Convention and calls for early ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. It further urges governments to promote technological advances through research and development, to substantially increase renewable energy resources and to promote transfer of technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions including through public sector and market-oriented approaches.

In this context, the CDM presents an extraordinary opportunity for cooperation. It allows developed and developing countries to work together towards the reduction of greenhouse gases while pursuing the goal of sustainable development. The first batch of CDM projects is expected early next year, with the first credits to be generated soon afterwards.

Dear delegates : In November this year, the Government of India reiterated its faith in the multilateral process and renewed its commitment to address climate change by organizing yet another international event called the "Climate Technology Bazaar and Conferences" in New Delhi. The Bazaar was a meeting point and a gateway for investors and recipients for clinching collaborative projects as well as a platform for promoting transfer of clean technologies. This Indian initiative also provided an opportunity for businesses to showcase their technologies and services. The Bazaar focused on technologies that encourage manufacturing and industrial operations that minimize greenhouse gas emissions and thereby reduce their environmental "footprint". The Expert Group on Technology Transfer and the Workshops on Adaptation were two other important events held along with the Technology Bazaar.

The ultimate goal of any action in the field of transfer of environmentally sound technologies should not be just applying particular technological solutions, but to enhance the capabilities of developing countries to assess the need, select, import, assimilate, adapt and develop appropriate technologies. Capacity building also has a role to play in ensuring that new technologies are compatible with and supportive of national environment and development priorities and contribute to cost-effectiveness in achieving global benefits. There is need to generate greater confidence in technology options for catalyzing initiatives around sustainable development priorities for achieving the Convention objectives. The declining proportion of ODA in the international finance for developing countries signals adversely for technology flows in various situations, which needs to be addressed on an urgent basis.

While the world should be proud of its progress, much more remains to be done. Greenhouse gas emissions from the developed countries may increase by 10% over the 1990 levels by 2010. Emissions from countries with economies in transition are also starting to increase. Effective action

needs to be taken by the developed countries for curtailing GHG emissions both domestically and through cooperative mechanisms.

Many of the measures in energy efficiency, fuel switching and renewable energy sources show considerable mitigation potential, provided that obstacles – financial, technological and institutional – can be overcome. Serious action to overcome these barriers is needed without delay, as the impacts of climate change are already being felt by developing countries which are the most vulnerable to extreme climate events, such as floods, droughts and severe heat waves. Adaptation involves much more than simply reacting to disasters and extreme weather events caused by climate change. It also seeks to increase the ability of countries to effectively cope with unavoidable changes and include adaptation measures in their overall sustainable development strategies.

Adaptation to climate change by developing countries will not be automatic. It entails considerable costs to them. The moot question is who pays for such costs. The UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol as well as various decisions of past eight Conferences of Parties enjoin the developed countries to assist the developing countries with financial and technological resources for their impending adaptation needs. I reiterate the need for early operationalisation of special climate change fund and the LDC fund as agreed at COP-8.

Ladies & Gentlemen : Even as we await the Protocol to enter into force, we have a full menu of work before us. The idea is to take stock of the progress which has been made under the convention process and repose our faith in multilateralism, bearing in mind that the present equilibrium of commitments and differentiation has to be maintained between developed and developing countries in various aspects, with no new commitments to be introduced for developing countries. We also need to separate out the grain from the chaff and concentrate on items of core significance to gainfully utilize the time available at COP-9 and work on the basis of consensus among all Parties to the Convention. And as we do all this, we must also pause and ponder on ways and means to improve the lives of millions of people by fighting poverty as an over-riding priority. This is to be done in a way that it will not exacerbate climate change but, instead, will contribute to abating it. Against this backdrop, let us also remind ourselves that the Convention enjoins the developed countries to take lead in combating climate change. Gathered as we are at the beginning of COP-9, it is for them to demonstrate this leadership by cooperating during this Conference and paving way for assisting developing countries with financial and technological resources as envisioned in the Convention and its Protocol.

To conclude, words of recognition are in order for those who gave so much of their time and effort in carrying out my duties in accordance with the decisions and actions of COP- 8. I have also consulted on the rules of procedure and report that there has been no change in positions. I would like to cordially thank the Bureau for their diligence and support over the course of the year and also thank the Executive Secretary, Joke Waller-Hunter for her commendable efforts. I thank the Government of Italy and His Excellency, Minister Altero Matteoli, for providing such a wonderful setting for our meeting. Lastly, I wish our COP 9 President, H.E. Minister Miklós Persányi, the best of luck in guiding this ninth Conference of the Parties to a successful and lasting outcome.

(Check against delivery)