

STATEMENT BY DR. ERWIN ARRIETA-VALERA, MINISTER OF
ENERGY AND MINES OF VENEZUELA BEFORE THE THIRD
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE CONVENTION ON CLIMATE
CHANGE
KYOTO, JAPAN
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Mr. Chairman of the Third Conference of the Parties of the Convention
on Climate Change. Ministers.

I would like to thank the Government and the authorities of Japan for
their hospitality, as well as for ^{organising} ~~the organization~~ of such an important event. I
have the pleasure to inform you that Venezuela has come to Kyoto with the
purpose of making every possible effort ^{to} ~~for~~ achieving success in this Conference.

My country believes ^{that} it is essential to define and adopt measures that will
effectively avoid the impact ~~which~~ the so-called greenhouse gases could have on
the environment. Such an effort can no longer be postponed. It is believed,
mistakenly, that such gases originate, disproportionately, from the combustion of
fossil fuels.

The issue which now concerns mankind and which has ^{recently} been the subject of
its attention ~~since recent times~~, poses some problems: how to armonize the
hipothesis and the thesis, the will and the way to eliminate the problem ~~that we~~
~~have~~ before us, and which we now are trying to resolve after almost two
centuries of unrestricted greenhouse emissions ^{grown} ~~by~~ developed countries.

For a while we believed at the historic Rio Conference -on the basis of the
premise which assigned the developed countries the sole responsibility for global
warming-, that we had succeeded in putting a stop to such a dangerous process.
Unfortunately, this was not the case. The commitments to stabilize emissions
which ^{were} ~~was~~ at that time undertaken by the industrialized countries were not
honoured. On the contrary, their collective emissions have not stopped increasing
since then.

Now we are told that those commitments were not "legally binding" and
that here, in Kyoto, real commitments will be undertaken. Up until now,
however, industrialized countries have not been able to agree as to the levels of
stabilization -much less reduction- nor the ways and time frames for achieving
them.

But the most surprising aspect is that, ^{despite} ~~in spite of~~ not having honoured
their commitments, and not having agreed on new "legally binding"
commitments, they are attempting to put as a precondition to developing
countries, who bear no historic responsibility for the problem in the first place,
to accept the imposition of yet to be determined limitation commitments.

As if this frontal pressure to impose new burdens on us were not enough, disguised or indirect methods have been devised to ~~reach~~ ^{and} the same goal, such as "voluntary" commitments, "joint implementation", or the euphemism of "advancing the implementation of the commitments under the Convention."

With this we do not mean that we developing countries are not already making efforts to find a structural solution to the problem. On the contrary, Many of us have voluntarily limited our emissions ~~through the implementation of reforms in pricing policies, the promotion of efficiency in the use of energy, the use of renewable sources of energy, and other measures.~~ ^{by}

In Venezuela, for instance, we have eliminated gasoline subsidies; we have initiated with great success a program ~~for the use of~~ ^{and} natural gas in vehicles; over ~~half~~ ^{1/2} of our electric requirements are met through hydroelectric power, ~~while we~~ ^{and we} have ambitious plans for expanding our hydroelectric capacity; and over half of our territory, covered by tropical forests and fragile ecosystems, has been protected for several years now, ~~by various~~ ^{under} environmental protection regimes.

In addition, Venezuela is also participating in an international effort ~~of~~ ^{to do} technological research ~~for the~~ ^{on} recycling and disposal of CO₂ derived from the combustion of fossil fuels.

Mr. Chairman, Venezuela's position is the following:

- 1) It is premature to impose on developing countries concrete and quantifiable commitments for the reduction or limitation of greenhouse gas emissions, before developed countries implement the commitments adopted in the Berlin Mandate.
- 2) The Kyoto Protocol must include the concept of the basket of gases which must include all gases that presumably contribute to global warming
- 3) It is also premature to talk about mechanisms such as "joint implementation" and emissions trading" between developed and developing countries before allowing ~~for~~ a period of time for industrialized countries to implement their reduction commitments, after which, on the basis of ~~the~~ ^{acquired} proven information and experience ~~acquired~~, mechanisms can be established that will ~~assure~~ ^{ensure} equity for developing countries in such types of transactions.
- 4) It is ~~unjust~~ ^{unfair} for industrialized countries to provide advantages, through subsidies and tariff and other trade barriers, to its inefficient producers of fossil fuels, to the detriment of the less polluting products from developing countries. ^{since} Such is the case with the orimulsion from our country, the use of which has been banned in developed countries, in spite of the fact that such fuel reduces ~~the~~ emissions of nitrous oxide. [?]

- 5) Mechanisms must be established to compensate developing countries that depend on the export of fossil fuels if the reduction measures adopted could ~~result in a~~ significant damage to these countries.

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Mr. Chairman, Kyoto offers an historic opportunity for industrialized countries to finally and seriously face up to their responsibilities before all of mankind. Only when they have done so, not only through words, but through effective and ascertainable realities, can we start talking about requiring greater efforts from developing countries, although never at the expense of our right and our duty to attain sustainable development and eradicate poverty from our planet.