

Statement by head of delegation from Bangladesh
Mr. Syed Marghuib Morshed
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Government of Bangladesh

Madame President, Mr. Executive Secretary, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Delegation from Bangladesh, I have the pleasure to express my sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Argentina for hosting the Fourth COP of the Climate Change Convention in this beautiful city of Buenos Aires. I am particularly pleased with the excellent arrangements that have been made to conduct this extremely important conference. Permit me, on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you, on your election as President and to congratulate the Bureau members as well, for their election to various positions.

Madame President,

We are meeting once again after the warmest year in recorded climate history. We have, after the consensus that we reached in Kyoto, experienced unprecedented weather extremes. Catastrophic floods have swept over large parts of India, China and Bangladesh. Cyclones and tornadoes have struck many parts of the world. We have not, in many countries of the world, fully recovered from the effects of El Nino and La Nina. Only in the last week, we have witnessed colossal damage of life and property due to irregular weather in some countries of Central America. That climate variability has taken its toll is a fact that needs no reiteration and to address this stupendous problem, attention must be focused on its roots-on the reduction of GHGs in the atmosphere.

Madame President,

Bangladesh is a small densely populated country. Its government is struggling to better the quality of life of its people. Two hundred years of colonial exploitation have retarded its economic and social growth. The people of Bangladesh have valid reasons to be concerned about the consequences of climate change. In the recent past there has been a marked increase in the incidence of natural disasters like droughts, floods and cyclones and in the near future climate change, it is feared, will make the occurrence of these calamities even more frequent. Agriculture in Bangladesh, on which most of the people depend, is likely to be hit hard, by the increase in salinity in the rivers that flow through the country and a large part of it may go under water if there is significant sea level rise caused by climate change.

Madame President,

Bangladesh is a least developed country where GHGs emissions due to anthropogenic interventions are negligible, yet it may have to pay a high price for something it is least responsible for. The countries of the world that are classified as developed and industrialised are responsible for most of the GHG emitted into the earth's atmosphere but the burden of their wanton acts will fall on countries like Bangladesh that are least equipped to deal with it.

Madame President,

At Rio de Janeiro on 1992, the nations of the world signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change. The great expectations that were raised earlier this decade, have not, however, materialised. We have not been able to adequately redress the problems of climate change. Few of the objectives of the Convention have taken concrete shape. The Kyoto Protocol under which the target for reduction of GHG emissions was substantially lowered for the benefit of the developed countries are yet to be ratified by the industrialised countries. Despite its inadequacies and limitations, we believe that the Protocol has created new ground on which objectives may be approximated. The developed countries have to take advantage of this and show good faith by reducing their GHG emissions within (if not ahead) of the stipulated time table.

Madame President,

We still adhere to our view, which we expressed unequivocally in Kyoto, that reduction of GHG emissions by developing countries and countries in transition can only be very limited and that unless the developed countries take more positive steps to reduce GHG emissions domestically all that we have tried to do, both at Rio and at Kyoto may turn out to be futile.

Madame President,

On the question of the Clean Development Mechanism, we would suggest that it should operate in principle through the market based mechanism, but projects should be allocated on an equitable regional and subregional basis to ensure that the existing inequities do not spread further.

We also consider it important that common methodologies should be applied to verification and certification of all three flexibility mechanisms, and in that context, we call upon the Parties to consider the allocation of a part of the proceeds to go for adaptation projects from Joint Implementation and Emissions Trading in a manner similar to the Clean Development Mechanism projects, in the future course of actions.

Madame President,

There is also an urgent need for the Parties to consider and review the progress made in emissions reduction by the Annex 1 countries, and in the transfer of new and additional financial resources, as well as environmentally sound technologies on concessional and preferential terms to developing countries.

Madame President,

Both the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol recognise the legitimate needs of the developing countries to eradicate poverty and achieve sustained growth. They also recognise that the largest share of the GHG emissions historically originated from the industrialised countries and even now these countries remain the main source of GHG emissions. This makes prompt remedial action on the part of these countries an environmental imperative.

Madame President,

The government and the people of Bangladesh take the problem of climate change very seriously. A high level inter-ministerial committee, to oversee, monitor and guide studies on climate change, has been constituted. With the limited resources at our disposal, and some help from development partners, we in Bangladesh, have prepared a preliminary emission inventory. Bangladesh is a participant in the Asia Least Cost Green House Gas Abatement Strategy (ALGAS) project funded by GEF and executed by the Asian Development Bank to identify mitigation strategies. In this process, we have involved the research organisations and representatives from the civil society within the country. Climate related issues form an important part of our national development agenda but more resources need to be allocated to equip Bangladesh to deal with all the possible consequences of climate change. Bangladesh is acutely in need of transfers of financial resources and technical expertise from the developed countries in order to cope with the problem that is likely to confront it as a result of the effects of climate change.

Madame President,

The responsibility of the world community in translating the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol into actions that are tangible and cannot be over emphasized. In this regard it is important to stress that

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- (a) the (developed) Annex 1 countries reduce their GHG emissions within the time schedule stipulated in the Protocol and
- (b) that a timely flow of adequate additional resources to least developed countries be ensured.

Because of global warming and its concomitant sea level rise, a number of densely populated countries like Bangladesh with low-lying coastal areas are likely to suffer most and may have to make super human efforts to rehabilitate ecological refugees. To help

them, the sparsely populated developed countries may have to review their present immigration policies.

Madame President and Distinguished Delegates,

On my own behalf and on behalf of the Bangladesh delegation, I express my thanks to you, for allowing me to say a few words on some of the issues that concern us most. We reaffirm our solemn pledge to the world community to work together with the other nations of the world to prevent, as far as possible, the adverse consequences of climate change and to make our planet a better place to live in.