

**STATEMENT  
BY  
THE HONOURABLE LLOYD AXWORTHY  
Head of the Canadian Delegation  
TO  
THE SIXTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
(CoP 6)  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK  
CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)**

The Hague, Netherlands  
November 21, 2000

I am pleased to be here today on behalf of the Honourable David Anderson, Canada's Minister of the Environment, who had to stay at home because of a general election.

I am here with me a very strong delegation composed of provincial and territorial ministers, representatives of industry, environmental organizations, Aboriginal peoples, municipalities and youth. This delegation reflects a broad based engagement of Canadians from all sectors in addressing the issue of climate change. We do this because we take the issue seriously. We want to work collectively, with all our partners, in responding to the challenge.

We often forget that the North is the area which is perhaps receiving the most severe impacts of climate change, and Canada is a Northern country. We see that the ice is melting. Polar bears are starving. The traditional lifestyle of Aboriginal peoples is threatened. The fauna and flora is highly disturbed.

We are working with our partners in the Arctic Council to coordinate our efforts. We are seeking to work with members of the European Union and the Nordic Council to provide a coordinated aspect in such a vital part of our global ecology.

So, we are on the frontline of the impact of climate change and we are taking the action to respond, and we are beginning to see results. Since Kyoto, we have succeeded in decoupling economic growth from emissions growth. Canada has become a leader in the science and modeling and, just last month, we adopted a National Climate Change Action Plan, which includes actions by our provinces and territories, in transportation, development of renewable energy, energy efficiency, in our homes and our industry, agriculture and forestry.

I want to make it very clear that Canada is committed to achieving the environmental objective of the Convention and the Protocol and intends to fulfill the majority of its obligations through domestic action. In this sense, we echo strongly and firmly the kind of commitment that was made by the Prime Minister of the Netherlands just a day ago.

But we also recognize that this is a global problem and the responses can only work if we recognize that there is a fundamental interdependence between developed and developing countries. Unless we respond to the interests and needs of both of those key ingredients, then CoP 6 cannot succeed.

Canada is responding, first by approving just recently, a \$100 million dollars to create a Canada Climate Change Development Fund. It is now up and running and showing results.

We are helping Nigeria identify areas for emissions reductions, transferring technology to China, helping Pacific island states pilot adaptation measures, building capacity for Least Developed Countries in the Sahel to deal with the problem of desertification. These and other actions demonstrate our strong and ongoing commitment to developing countries.

But, we must go beyond that. We all understand that we would need to fundamentally reform the Global Environment Facility (GEF) if we are to achieve the kind of concern and interests that have been so eloquently expressed here today. We need to address, in particular, the special needs of the Least Developed Countries and of Small Island States.

That means that we must first begin with the fundamental commitment to replenish the Global Environment Facility. Canada has committed an additional \$20 million towards that objective. We also realize that we must reform the GEF. We have heard increasingly about problems of bureaucracy, red tape and lack of access.

We must work with developing countries to change those bureaucratic institutions. We should also consider the possibility of creating a new window within the GEF to deal with specific climate change issues. It could, for example, implement an adaptation and funds created by the levy on the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) to define a way that we could help assist smaller countries to get access to GEF funding in an effective, streamlined, coherent way.

We also believe that we can work effectively on questions of technology transfer where governments, through the GEF instrument, can help mobilize private sector funding, take practical steps to support the access to the CDM by smaller, developing countries.

In this case, we must begin to work together at this meeting to come up with a clear, cogent plan for that kind of financial reform.

I can say to you, Mr. President, that Canada is firmly committed and believes that that must be one of the hallmarks of our existence and presence here.

Let me just close my comments with what we have heard here so far. Yesterday, President Chirac told us to stick to the Kyoto Protocol.

The goal of that Convention and the Protocol is the reduction of the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, wherever they come from and from whatever the source may be.

The Kyoto Protocol provides various ways to ensure that countries meet their targets according to their specific national circumstances.

For example, when not properly managed, forests and agricultural soils can be a source of carbon in the atmosphere. To truly reduce greenhouse gases, we need to manage our forests and agricultural soils so that they can become an effective sink to withdraw carbon from the atmosphere.

It would also have an important effect on our fight against desertification, on biodiversity, on water quality and other co-benefits related to enhanced environmental protection.

Also, trading is important for environmental reasons. Maximum flexibility is good for the environment, because it provides the resources necessary to begin to tackle some of our most serious problems. If constrained, in fact, it would become a deterrent to effective environmental action.

We have a tremendous opportunity with the Kyoto Protocol to harness economic forces and private sector resources to resolve environmental problems. Nowhere else does an environmental matter have this kind of capacity and power on its behalf.

We need to take advantage of this, not put it in a straightjacket.

In working to provide full access to sinks and Kyoto Mechanisms included in the Kyoto Protocol, Canada is working to make sure that we can find flexible formulas and creative solutions based upon the objective of securing a better environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we have four days in front of us. We want to get a deal. Canada has flexibility in approaching these important, fundamental issues. We will exercise that flexibility in a way that ensures the environmental integrity of the Protocol.

I hope that everyone here today is engaged in exactly that same approach, with that same spirit. We can succeed -- if there is a common commitment, to pursue common interests, the common good -- through a process in the spirit of accommodation. We have to succeed, because we owe it to the planet and future generations.

Thank you, Mr. President.