

Third Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
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Statement by the International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations (ISMUN)
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Mr. President, Distinguished guests, Honorable delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to address you on behalf of the International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations (ISMUN) and its global constituency of young people from all continents.

Young people and youth NGOs have taken the lead in many countries in the search for the new consumption and production patterns which are required to avert the disastrous consequences of climate change. Yet little progress has been made because of the failure of the richest and most powerful countries to act in the interest of present and future generations.

The time since Rio has been a time of broken promises. Commitments were made to limit greenhouse gas emissions, but instead the opposite has taken place. Promises were made for new and additional resources for sustainable development, but instead we have experienced new and additional cuts.

Some 85 percent of today's youth live in the developing countries. They will be the first to suffer from the approaching disasters caused by climate change

The United Nations Charter recognize the equal rights of nations large and small. We thus find it appalling that some countries who demand maximum security for themselves, even to the extent of accumulating nuclear weapons, insist on continuing to pollute the atmosphere at the risk of climate change that will obliterate the very existence of a number of small island states and lead to the destruction of the habitat of many developing countries.

The single greatest threat to the global climate and survival of mankind would be the use of nuclear weapons leading to a nuclear winter. Therefore we reiterate the call for a convention on the abolition of nuclear weapons to be concluded by the year 2000.

There is no doubt where the responsibility lies for centuries of greenhouse gas emissions. And there is no way that the luxury emissions of the few can be equalled with the survival emissions of the many. We strongly reject attempts to shift the burden for resolving the problems caused by industrialized countries to the poor in the developing world.

This is not the time for compromises that fall below the minimum required to avert catastrophe. If some countries chose to opt out of the imperatives of mankind it must not prevent the rest of the world from reaching a principled agreement with the necessary cuts in emissions from the industrialized countries. We are convinced that pressure from the peoples of the world may finally convince the recalcitrant country to join.

The question of climate change is fundamentally an issue of building a more just and equitable world. Without a fundamental change of course there is little hope to prevent further erosion of the global environment which is spurred by greed and shortsighted business interests. Ways and means must be found to realize the right to development for all.

For developing countries to follow with realistic measures they need full access to new and sustainable technologies. The threat of climate change represents a great challenge to generate the new and additional resources required for sustainable development. The possibilities for an early introduction of global taxes and fees to support sustainable development for all must be fully explored.

To accomplish the great tasks for global cooperation in the new millennium we need strong and democratic international institutions. In a world of chaos we need the democratic internationalism symbolized by the United Nations more than ever.

We feel that the global public debate on climate change has just started. It must now be vigorously pursued in all parts of the world to generate public support for the sometimes hard and difficult measures that are called for to safeguard our common heritage, the atmosphere. It is our belief that young people and youth NGOs could play a crucial role in this process.

Thank you.