



**ADDRESS OF  
JOSE MARIA FIGUERES,  
PRESIDENT OF COSTA RICA**

**BEFORE THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
TO THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Kyoto, December 8, 1997**

Prime Minister Hashimoto  
President Clodumar  
Vice President Gore  
Minister Ohki  
Executive Secretary Zammit Cutajar  
Distinguished Heads and Members of Delegations  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by thanking the Government of Japan for hosting this Conference of the Parties. Mr. Prime Minister, it is a special pleasure for me to reciprocate in this beautiful city of Kyoto, your recent visit to Costa Rica, and your meeting with all the Central American Presidents to discuss issues of sustainable development.

I do not think I exaggerate by predicting that the paradigm of development of the past hundred years is coming to a close today. At the threshold of a new century, the dawn of a new age is breaking over us: an age characterized not by the quantity of growth, but by the quality of life.

Independently of the concrete agreement we may reach at the end of this session, let me point out that we have in fact already reached ~~the most~~ <sup>the very</sup> important result; to raise worldwide awareness about the threat of climate change through the gradual process of negotiation of this Convention. I therefore would like to thank and commend the dedication and perseverance of the delegations who have been tirelessly working during months to set us off to a good start.

The arrival today of the political leaders puts us into a new stage of the negotiations. We are here to help our negotiators by taking the political decisions to forge a viable and significant agreement. We can no longer hide behind our positions.

By the end of this round of negotiations we need three things; significant cuts from the industrialized countries, a bridging financial mechanism, and <sup>active</sup> voluntary participation from the developing countries. We still have time to bring all three to a fruitful conclusion. Let me refer to each.

First, we all know that the overall cuts have to be significant. The time has come for the 32 industrialized countries of the world to take the lead. The currently tabled overall

emission reductions are simply too low. A meaningful effort has to be made. I urge you to deliver a joint target, which will make a real difference to the environment.

Secondly, we need to agree on a financial mechanism that will link the industrial world with the developing, and the environment with economic growth. As you all know Costa Rica has developed the concept and the practice of a marketable instrument that will value emission reductions. Expanding such a mechanism to a worldwide level will voluntarily engage all Parties to achieve the ultimate objective of this Convention. Thirdly, we need a vow from the developing countries that we will do our best effort. We need to guarantee that those countries that will be financially assisted to implement projects that mitigate climate change, will do so within a policy framework that leads to sustainable development.

Let us be clear that these three elements are integrally related. No single one can be achieved without the others, and a successful final agreement must contain all three.

The developing countries have made concrete proposals for the first two critical elements. I believe the third could be worked out as soon as the industrialized countries commit to targets and a financial mechanism. My friends, <sup>at the UN</sup> the ball is in your court.

The challenge we are facing is larger than any environmental task we have undertaken in the past. We all face difficult choices <sup>in this Convention</sup> for our economies and national politics. It has been a long and arduous journey to Kyoto. But we are doing the right thing. Let us cooperate to complete the task at hand with integrity, so that we can all return to our governments, our societies and, most importantly to our families, with the satisfaction of having fought the good fight, and of having won a future we can all share.

Thank you very much.