

**Message from
His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom
President of the Republic of Maldives
to the Third Session of Conference of the Parties
to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
Kyoto, December 1997**

**and Statement by
His Excellency Mr. Abdul Rasheed Hussain
Minister of Planning, Human Resources and Environment
Republic of Maldives
at the Third Session of Conference of the Parties
to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
Kyoto, December 1997**

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you Mr. President on your election to preside over this Conference. At the same time, I would also like to thank the Government of Japan, for the warm welcome and hospitality.

The President of Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom has sent a message to this third session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Convention. Mr. President, it will be my great pleasure to present the message to the Conference of the Parties and now with your permission I read:

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates:

As you gather in Kyoto for this important Conference, I would like to wish you success in your efforts to reach agreement on legally binding targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Tha Maldives is one of the small states. We are not in a position to change the course of events in the world. But what you do or do not do here will greatly influence the fate of my people. It can also change the course of world history.

It need hardly be said that many others share the predicament of the people of the Maldives. Indeed, the fate of the entire world is at stake. For, climate change is the most pervasive threat that looms before us. Action cannot be deferred any longer. On behalf of the people of the Maldives, therefore, I call upon all nations not to miss this historic opportunity. We must agree on effective reductions of greenhouse gas emissions to curb global warming. This is a plea of a small state, an endangered people. We are taking all possible measures to conserve and protect our environment. But, the seas will rise from beyond our borders. And that will be caused by events outside our space and shores. There is little we can do about them. But what the international community can do, will have a crucial effect.

Ultimately, ours is not an appeal merely to save ourselves. It is one to save the whole world. Our destiny cannot be separated from the rest. If we miss this vital opportunity, the future of humankind may be unthinkable. I am confident that the conclusions of this meeting will offer the real hope of creating a better and an environmentally safer world for the generations to come.

End of Message.

Mr. President, At the dawn of a new millenium, when everyone has the vision for a better future, our children are subject to fear and uncertainty. Climate change and sea level rise haunt them with loss of home, loss of their motherland and loss of identity. For them a Protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is not a billion-dollar deal crafted to tilt the global economic balance. For them it means hope. It means survival.

Mr. President, Climate change is a global problem. All countries must act to solve this problem. In doing so we must adhere to the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. Already the developing countries are taking important measures on their part. In this regard, setting targets for some developing countries should not be taken as an excuse to delay action by the countries that have a greater historic and moral responsibility.

Mr. President, the seven countries of SAARC, Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have issued a common position for this Conference. The Environment Ministers of SAARC believe that in setting the targets for Annex I countries, the first reduction step should not be later than 2005 and should not be lower than 7.5% by the year 2005, relative to 1990 levels. The common position of SAARC represents the view of one fifth of humanity.

Mr. President, We left Rio with hope, We left Berlin, a step forward. Now we leave Kyoto with a sinking feeling. Unless we act sincerely to save the future of humankind, the next step: Kyoto Mandate: I fear will be the death sentence for Small Island States.

Thank you.