

Framework Convention on Climate Change
Conference of the Parties
Sixth Session

Statement by Mr. Kjell Larsson

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The Hauge, November 2000



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I had prepared for a regular speech, factual and reasonable and responsible.

I will not give that speech.

I will be very personal.

Last year, the very last year of the 20th century, I had a grand-son, Felix.

In about fifteen days, during the very first year of the 21st century, I hope to have one more.

One was born in the very twilight of the carbon century, one during the very dawn of what we all hope to be a greener, much greener century.

We are this week deciding on their future. I have made myself the promise never to talk, to think or to act on climate change without at the same time thinking of my grandchildren and of the millions of children that together with them will inherit our beautiful blue and white planet.

I will however think of them many times without thinking of the climate.

They will be about the age we are now when it is time to evaluate the scenarios and prognoses we now make. They will discuss what was decided a long time ago here in the Hague. They might look at us on the same way as we are now looking at the human and political failures leading to World War II. They might look at us as the generation that created welfare in one part of the world and ruined the atmosphere and the future of the whole world. Or they might look at us as the generation that understood the dangers of climate change; that took action in spite of the costs and efforts that were required, that met the global challenge with the right sense of urgency; and that saw the needs to support development and combat poverty. It is with that sense of urgency we now have to continue and conclude this decisive conference.

The distinguished former chairman of IPCC, professor Bert Bohlin, yesterday told me that the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere will increase by an amount equivalent to an increase of carbon dioxide by about ten percent during the next twenty years if nothing is done. With a successful outcome of this meeting the increase will be about nine percent. The difference appears small. This does of course not mean that what we achieve here this week is of little importance. On the contrary. This

is a beginning. It is the first few meters of a 100 meter run. And everyone knows how important it is to have a rapid start in a sprinting competition. And what we are now doing is to prepare for the acceleration needed if we are to succeed.

Immediately after this meeting we must start preparing for the next commitment period with convergence as an important part.

Finally, a word of warning. I think that many of us have noticed a growing public awareness of climate change, resulting from more and more severe weather-related accidents and more and more frequent alarming scientific warnings of the risks we are creating by changing the chemical composition of the atmosphere. Others might feel that we have made stronger commitments than our citizens can support. The commitments made in Kyoto will be fifteen years old in 2012. Those who say that we now are doing too much may, in a couple of years, say that we are doing far too little.