

**Statement of Sri Lankan delegation at COP4**

*Delivered by Dr Rupa Wickramaratne, National Coordinator/Climate Change at the Ministry of Forestry & Environment, speaking in place of the Hon. Nandmithra Ekanayake, Minister of Forestry & Environment of the Government of Sri Lanka.*

Madame President, Distinguished Delegates.

I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madame President, on your election as President of this Conference and wish you success. I am pleased to offer you our felicitations on behalf of the Sri Lanka delegation. I also wish to thank you and the Government and people of Argentina, and as you said the entire Latin American and Caribbean Region, for hosting this important session of the Conference of Parties in your beautiful country. I would like to inform COP4 that Sri Lanka is taking all possible steps to implement the Convention.

Madam President, I have the honour to speak today in place of the Hon. Nandimithra Ekanayake, Minister of Forestry & Environment of the Government of Sri Lanka, who had hoped to be here with us. I convey to you his regrets that he is unable to be present in person. As you know, Sri Lanka is presently Chairperson of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, widely known as SAARC. The SAARC Environment Ministers met in Sri Lanka, just prior to this Conference and on behalf of the seven countries, which are members of SAARC, namely, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, agreed a common position on Climate Change which I shall now present to you.

I quote: "On the eve of the Fourth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, being held in Buenos Aires, the Ministers of Environment of the SAARC countries meeting in Colombo from October 30 to November 1, 1998, agree the following:

*Urge Annex 1 Parties to expedite signing the Kyoto Protocol for its ratification and coming into force.*

*Further urge* Annex 1 Parties to take urgent and effective steps domestically to implement the commitments undertaken by them to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases.

*Emphasize* that a fundamental pre-requisite for designing emissions trading, as provided in the Kyoto Protocol, is the determination of equitable emission entitlements of the Parties. The entitlements cannot be derived from past emissions which are inequitable. The design of the various mechanisms in the Protocol entails prior examination of the various fundamental issues, followed by methodological questions before the operational issues can be taken up. This will ensure that inequities do not get further extended and that any precept having the potential of depriving the non-Annex 1 parties of their right to develop is not allowed.

*Recognize* the urgent need for the Parties to the Convention to review the negligible progress made in the transfer of new and additional financial resources as well as environmentally sound technologies on concessional and preferential terms to the developing countries, with a view to ensuring demonstrable progress early.

*Express* concern that any attempt by some Annex 1 Parties to link their ratification of the Kyoto Protocol to the introduction of new commitments for non-Annex 1 Parties will only delay the Protocol coming into force. Such an attempt is totally unwarranted within the framework of the Climate Change Convention."

This, Madame President, is the common position of the SAARC countries which constitute nearly twenty percent of the world's population. We earnestly request you and the distinguished delegates to take note of this common position.

Thank you, Madame President.