

Arab Republic of Egypt

Ministry of State for Environmental
Affairs

Statement by

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Environmental Affairs**

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United Nations Framework of Climate Change

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Mr. Chairman
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen
Friends and Colleagues

I would like to add my voice to the rest of my colleagues, as we express our appreciation to the Government of the Netherlands and its people, for the massive efforts that they have put into organizing this conference.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, for bringing this global collective wisdom yet another time, under one roof so that we can together work on our unfinished agenda.....with a single-minded determination- and agree on serious, action-oriented, long lasting, sound solutions to save our one and only planetary home.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to turn the clock backwards 7,000 years, and travel through history to the time of the Ancient Egyptians. Do you know that they had strong environmental concerns then? Our ancient ancestors recorded their reverence for nature on the inscriptions in their temples and tombs. It is clear from the rich legacy they left behind -and that incidentally belongs to the world at large- that they felt a serious responsibility for stewardship of the earth and its bounty.

The divine appeared everywhere in nature: earth, water and air were personifications of divinity, and as such their care and nurturing were imperative. Does this not hold today as it did in the distant past? Surely we can and should do no less.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As they say: "Hell is paved with good intentions". Indeed, an abundance of good intentions has been repeatedly expressed over the past 8 years. Unfortunately, good intentions alone will not stabilize what is quickly becoming an enflamed atmosphere, nor will it put on hold environmental disasters and human suffering that cannot be wished away. Indeed, the need for action is loud and clear.

Mr. Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,

In Egypt we share the concerns of other non-Annex 1 countries. Without a clear enforcement framework that mandates meaningful action honoring the obligations made under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto protocol the fate of these negotiations, and those to follow is doomed. Of particular concern to us, is the minimal progress achieved by Annex-1 countries in reducing their emissions since 1990.

Both in Bonn and Lyon this year, priority issues from the perspective of developing countries were clearly expressed. The transfer of environment-

friendly, non-polluting technologies, as well as capacity building with the necessary related mechanisms and resources continue to be high on our agenda.

Like many other developing countries, Egypt is committed to building national capacity and expertise; particularly in the fields of vulnerability assessment, adaptation technologies, monitoring and systematic observation as well as climate modelling.

At the regional level, and as members in the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment, as well as the African Ministers Conference for the Environment, and together with the Group of 77 and China, Egypt continues to play an active role in formulating common positions and in expressing shared concerns.

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to be able to report before this distinguished gathering that Egypt's national climate change portfolio has developed significantly since our last CoP meeting. The following are a few updates.

At the national level, Egyptian milestones at present include the establishment of a national energy efficiency council that is assigned the mandate of implementing a national energy efficiency strategy, currently under preparation.

We also continue to promote renewable energy resources with a vision to realizing sustainable development goals, in addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Furthermore, Egypt has a strong national interest in the Clean Development Mechanism. An interest that has triggered a process where together with the World Bank and the Swiss government we are preparing a national CDM strategy to assess the potential for CDM opportunities in Egypt.

Egypt's position on the CDM is clear. We recognize the potential the CDM has in facilitating the implementation of climate change projects. Equally important, however, is the need to integrate a transparent and efficient system of monitoring and verification in its design. We also have to guarantee equity in participation among developing countries, and ensure that efforts are undertaken to reduce high transaction costs and to decipher the complexities that exist in the design of the project cycle.

Distinguished Delegates,

As we continue to develop a global, long term, and multi-stakeholder process, we cannot ignore communication and awareness-raising as integral elements for its success.

The private sector in developing and developed countries should be sensitized to play a more active role in this process. So should non-governmental organizations ... a force to be reckoned with as they continue to gain credibility and recognition in developing countries, including Egypt. Furthermore, a transparent free flow of information should be secured at a global level with a paralleled need to simplify

the information to the man and woman on the street. We also strongly believe that public participation and a people-centered approach are of great value in addressing climate change challenges.

Colleagues and friends,

In our electronic global village we must recognize that none of us is immune and that our vulnerabilities are just as interrelated as our interests. In 65 BC Horace wisely said and I quote "Your own property is at stake when your neighbor's house is on fire".

We should not lose sight of the principles of equity and common-but-differentiated responsibilities that we agreed to at the onset of this process and those that we committed ourselves to in so many ways. Let us also not lose sight of the binding decisions that we have agreed to in previous Conferences of Partiesdecisions such as implementing the Buenos Aires Action Plan should not be undermined in anyway.

Mr. Chairman,

As always, Egypt stands ready with our unwavering commitment to foster international cooperation, in a spirit of friendship and mutual understanding, with a sense of shared responsibility to protect our precious planet which will sustain us and our children today and tomorrow.

Whether from the North or the South let us together challenge climate change with our common store of knowledge, wealth of experience and more importantly a sense of purpose and immediate action. Let us be among the group of people who make things happen rather than those who passively watch and wonder what happened. Indeed this is a reality within our grasp.

Thank you (in Dutch).