

**INTERVENTION OF CARLOS MANUEL RODRIGUEZ,**  
**MINISTER OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT OF COSTA RICA,**  
**ON BEHALF OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN DELEGATIONS**

**HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE FOURTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE**  
**FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

**Buenos Aires, Argentina.**

Madam President:

I have the honor to address you on behalf of Costa Rica and the fellow countries of Central America: Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua y Panamá.

Together with the other members of the Group of 77 and China, the Central American countries are proud of the excellent organization of this Conference of the Parties, the first one hosted by a developing country. For the Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean this satisfaction is even greater. Allow me to congratulate you and through you, thank your government and the people of Argentina for the hospitality with which we have been treated during our stay.

We would like to call your attention to the tragedy which we are living in Central America due to climatic effects. Today our people have been the recipients of a devastating message from nature. Vast extensions of our territory have been washed out. The destruction has reached unprecedented levels due to the fury of the hurricane Mitch. Material losses exceed the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Preliminary estimates of human suffering are even worse. More than 30,000 dead and disappeared, 3 million displaced and homeless, in addition to the loss of \$5 billion dollars in infrastructure. In seven days of destruction, Nicaragua and Honduras have suffered a setback of 20 years in economic, social and environmental progress.

This regional catastrophe has evidenced the high vulnerability of the Central American isthmus, comparable to that of the small island states due to both size and geographic location.

We will need a long time, and all possible help on the part of friendly governments and multilateral organizations, in order to restore in our countries at least the quality of life which they had when we started our negotiations here last week.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Central America raises the flag of the regional initiative to join international solidarity efforts. In the Presidential Summit held in El Salvador this Monday, the Presidents requested international debt forgiveness for Honduras and Nicaragua, the two most affected nations.

But this request goes beyond humanitarian help, which is so necessary in these difficult times for Central America.

We vehemently urge all Parties to the Climate Change Convention to actively comply with the commitments they have incurred upon ratification. All countries, in a common but differentiated manner must make the necessary efforts so that we can achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention: the stabilization of the concentration of greenhouse gases.

We cannot wait any longer. Climate change is not a threat of tomorrow; it is a reality of today. Every day it is more evident that the rise in greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere is warming our planet, and that the frequency and intensity of extreme climatic events are increasing.

In Central America, the hurricane Mitch, the El Nino and La Nina phenomena, as well as the devastating forest fires, are increasing both in intensity and frequency on a daily basis. This phenomena are no theoretical simulations on climate change manifestations, but a clear evidence that they are occurring.

My dear delegates, Central America has the moral authority to demand from Parties included in Annex I of the Convention to start concrete actions of compliance with the mitigation and emission reduction commitments adopted by consensus in Kyoto.

Ever since the beginning of the negotiations, Central America has been an actor and implementer of concrete actions:

- Under Article 4.1, we have adopted policies and measures congruent with the ultimate objective of the Convention, and with the regional human sustainable development agenda.
- Within the framework of the Convention, we have used the Activities Implemented Jointly as one of the mechanisms which would allow financial investment in our sustainable development agendas.
- We have developed financial instruments which internalize the environmental benefit of emission reductions. These instruments open new investment opportunities for industrialized countries so that they may meet part of their emission reductions commitments.
- We have undertaken different measures to consolidate the national parks systems, the national and regional biological reserves such as the biological corridor, as well as the sustainability of forest and agro-forest activities and the promotion of renewal energy sources. Both the private and public sector, as well as social organizations have participated in these efforts.
- We have developed energy efficiency programs in the industrial, commercial and domestic sectors, as well as established policies for the reduction of vehicle and industrial greenhouse gas emissions.

- Important steps have been undertaken towards the Central American energy sector integration with the purpose of finding new energy scenarios which are both economically and environmentally sustainable.

This regional process has been facilitated by the Central American Commission for the Environment and Development, the regional entity for the environmental integration, which has to be strengthened so that it can continue playing this role in the activities and programs related to the Global Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation efforts.

For Central America, greenhouse gas emissions sinks are very important within the flexibility mechanisms allowed by the Protocol. As main actors and protagonists in the definition of Clean Development Mechanism, we would like to remind you today that the interpretation of the negotiators in Kyoto was to give the sinks in the CDM the same treatment that they were given in Section 3. This affirmative statement seems to be reflected in the crossed reference which appears in both Articles.

Also, if we take into consideration the vulnerability of the isthmus natural ecosystems and socioeconomic systems, we would like to emphasize the importance that all flexibility mechanisms contribute to the generation of financial resources for the execution of adaptation policies and measures.

We share what G77 and China have expressed, that the definition of modalities and procedures of the Clean Development Mechanism should be a priority for the Subsidiary Bodies.

We believe that it is necessary to continue with the pilot phase of the Activities Implemented Jointly and to make all efforts so that the CDM can be operational on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2000. To that end, more than ten Latin American countries have suggested the possibility of establishing an interim phase as of the year 2000 in order to begin the implementation of projects under this Mechanism, thereby enabling all regions of the world to gain useful experiences.

I would like to conclude my intervention with a fervent call to leave selfish postures behind, which are the result of specific interests, and to assume the historical responsibility pertaining to each Party.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

May the recently suffered destruction in Central America make us reflect upon the seriousness of the situation which confronts us all. May it also lead to responsible decisions. It is essential that all Parties sign and ratify the Kyoto Protocol so that real mitigation activities may begin, and that each and every Party may meet their corresponding obligations for the benefit of Mankind.