



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SILVIA MERECA, HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC, AT THE OPENING PLENARY OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES OF THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (Durban, South Africa, 28 November 2011)

Madam President,

1. I have the distinct honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your election as President of the seventeenth session of the Conference of Parties and the seventh session of the Conference of Parties serving as a Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.
3. I would also like, on behalf of the Group, to take this opportunity to express our appreciations and gratitude to the Government and people of South Africa, one of our Members, for the warm hospitality expressed since the moment we arrived in this beautiful city of Durban, and for the excellent arrangement and facilities that they have provided us and will facilitate our work to achieve our objectives. We would also like to thank the Secretariat of UNFCCC for their excellent arrangements.
4. The Group of 77 and China associates itself to the tribute this room has paid to Mr. Mama Konate. We are deeply saddened by his sudden passing away just a few weeks ago. This is a great loss for his country, for the climate change community and for this Group. Mr. Konate played a key and active role from 1997, applying his wisdom, knowledge and insight to defend and reaffirm the pursuits of developing countries and especially least developed countries. We strongly agree with the message conveyed by the UNFCCC Secretariat upon his demise: "Undoubtedly, the climate change process has lost one of its most active, dedicated and prominent leaders". Let us follow his guidance and redouble our efforts in our fight against climate change. We are certain that by making this, the Conference in Durban will deliver a successful outcome.

Madam President,

5. The Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate that -although developing countries have not contributed to the creation of the problem- we continue to suffer most from the adverse impacts of climate change, and the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. The Group also underlines the challenges faced by developing countries from the impact of response measures.
6. This has been confirmed a few days ago by the Summary for Policy Makers from the Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX) that was adopted by IPCC member governments. The report highlights that "There is high confidence that both maximum and minimum daily temperatures have increased on a global scale due to the increase of greenhouse gases" and studies show that it is virtually certain that -on a global scale- hot days become even hotter and occur more often. Moreover, fatality rates and economic losses expressed as a proportion of GDP are higher in developing countries. This confirms that high ambition of emission reductions of GHG is urgently needed.

7. The report recently released continues to support the fact that developing countries will continue to be most affected by climate change. At the same time, and with fewer means, we continue to struggle to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. It is therefore urgent and pressing to find solutions for the climate change challenge that at the same time address inequality issues, right here, right now.

Madam President,

8. During the informal consultations you led last October, we had the opportunity to outline our expectations for this Conference, hosted by a developing country. Durban is a key step in the climate change negotiation process. Its outcome should be satisfactory to all developing countries as well as developed countries. COP17 must advanced negotiations in both tracks, under the Convention and the Protocol, based on these fundamental tenets:

- The Convention and the Kyoto Protocol must be preserved.
- The Bali Road Map and the two-track negotiation are to be followed, and Dec.1/CP.16 rendered operational.
- Negotiation process and outcomes must be carried out in an open, transparent and inclusive manner.
- Multilateralism is a political tool that has proved beneficial to all of us, and clearly to developing countries. It must be safeguarded.
- The second commitment period is paramount in order to contribute to the solution of climate change crisis. Significant and ambitious efforts must be made in order to achieve its adoption.

9. The Group of 77 and China trusts that we will be able to achieve in Durban an outcome that is comprehensive and balanced, enabling the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention through long-term cooperative action now, up to and beyond 2012, pursuant to the results of the thirteenth and sixteenth sessions of the Conference of the Parties, addressing both implementation tasks and issues that are still to be concluded, on the basis of equity and taking into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

10. We expect that during this session, the Cancun decision regarding the Adaptation Committee, the Standing Committee for the Green Climate Fund and the Technology Mechanism will be fully operationalized. We urge developed countries to show their commitment to these mechanisms in concrete terms, and to capitalize the Green Climate Fund from their public financial resources as soon as possible. As the aforementioned SREX report stresses "sound decisions on infrastructure, urban development, public health, and insurance, as well as for planning are needed to cope with the adverse effects of climate change."

11. Developing countries are already contributing to the global response to climate change and we will continue to do so. In this regard, and following the principles of the Convention, developed countries shall provide new, additional, stable, and predictable financial resources, capacity building and technology transfer will allow us to scale up the mitigation and adaptation actions under way.

12. We reiterate the necessity of enabling the effective participation of Palestine in the UNFCCC process and to make every effort to grant Palestine access to funding from different sources and mechanisms.

In conclusion, Madam President,

13. Allow me to reiterate that a comprehensive and balanced outcome under the two negotiation tracks must contribute to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention, to protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations, and must be firmly rooted in equity, in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention.

14. I would like to assure you that the Group of 77 and China will continue to support South Africa. Under your able leadership, Madam President, the Group will continue to engage constructively and in good faith during the course of this session to make Durban a much needed success.

I thank you.

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