

Statement by Her Excellency Dr. Massoumeh Ebtekar, Vice-President and Head of the Department of Environment (Islamic Republic of Iran), on behalf of the Group of 77, High-level Segment, COP-7, UNFCCC

Marrakech, 7 November 2001

Mr. President,
Honourable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The message of the Group of 77 and China to the High-level Segment of the -Seventh Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, a critical stage in this unique international process of historical significance and import, is a message of dialogue, understanding, engagement and proactive, constructive – albeit principled – flexibility. Here, we stand at the beginning of the end of a long journey towards making the implementation of the Climate Change Convention a reality. In Bonn, the international community resolved, against all odds and an atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty, to act on the imperative of multilateralism and reach a set of overall political agreements – the Bonn Agreements – which made the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol possible by the year 2002. Those Agreements, an honourable deal indeed, needed to be translated into solid legal language and practical decisions. Part of that undertaking was completed in Bonn, the rest left for Marrakesh. This Conference has the historical task of completing the remaining decisions and adopting all of them to give effect to the overall Agreements. The assembly of distinguished dignitaries and ministers, coming at the wake of a week-long intense negotiations, and representing the collective political will and determination of the entire international community, cannot but signal the necessary drive and impetus - the final green light - to all the negotiators, on both sides of the development divide, to overcome the remaining hurdles and crown the Bonn Agreements with yet a higher level of international consensus. This signifies the particular importance we in the developing world attach to our long-term destiny and the future of our environment as a prerequisite to peace and prosperity for present and future generations. And nothing should stand in the way of the actual realization of this collective resolve.

Mr. President,

Before turning to the practical aspects of our work here, I should avail of this opportunity to extend, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, our most sincere gratitude and appreciation to you, and through you, to the Government and People of Morocco for hosting this historical Conference and for all the excellent arrangements. I am fully cognizant of the extremely positive and critical contribution the Group of 77 and China in its entirety, and the excellent leadership of Ambassador Asadi and his colleagues, representing the Group, have been making to the process of negotiations, in Bonn and here in Marrakesh. A realistic assessment of the state of negotiations indicates that the progress made thus far in COP-7, thanks to the sense of objectivity, cooperation and compromise of the negotiators and your able, seasoned leadership, is solid and very encouraging. There is cause for satisfaction and strong optimism, but we are not out of doldrums yet. For our part, as underlined in the Group's statement last week, you can rest assured of our collective determination to stay the course and give you and the Bureau full cooperation towards the final success of the Marrakesh Conference.

The occasion could hardly be more opportune for me to present the Group position of the developing world and simultaneously represent the Islamic Republic of Iran in this year of Dialogue among Civilizations, particularly in a historical city as Marrakesh, an important nexus where cultures and civilizations have met and left their indelible imprint on history. The positive outlook and approach of the developing world in this process which made the achievement of the Bonn Agreements possible has brought us to this point. We will

certainly continue the process along the same lines and with the same spirit till we complete our task at COP-7. I remain confident that all our negotiating partners will reciprocate this outlook and approach and lend themselves in good faith to resolving the remaining outstanding issues. The welcome agreement on compliance last night and the progress in other important areas point to a certain degree of timely realism among some of our negotiating partners. The same spirit should continue to prevail till the very end.

Mr. President,

Turning to the outstanding issues, let me just lay out, very briefly though, the negotiating positions of the Group. What you have already heard from the Group of 77 over the past week on various issues before the Conference simply need not be repeated. Rather, I merely suffice to address just a few areas which, in our view, are of a particularly political nature, and hence, call for political guidance, which the distinguished colleagues are here to provide.

First, on the legally binding nature of the compliance regime, which is intimately related to the very logic of the Kyoto Protocol. The agreement reached last night is indeed a very good outcome. Its elements provide the framework for a strong, well-defined binding compliance regime as the only effective guarantee for the meaningful pursuit of the objectives of the Protocol and the implementation of its provisions, and for that matter, the objectives of the Bonn Agreements and COP-7. We believe the Ministers had already decided in Bonn that these procedures and mechanisms shall be legally binding. With the agreed elements in place, the COP-MOP 1 should proceed to finalize the necessary arrangements that would ensure implementation of the Protocol and bring these procedures into effect. The deal on compliance, including as regards eligibility requirements for participation in mechanisms, now can ensure effective, multilateral monitoring of the enforcement of the guidelines for their functioning. Also, with the robust compliance regime now in our hands, LULUCF-related activities would not simply turn into a compendium of loopholes. Moreover, what was achieved would as well help safeguard the much-cherished notion of the environmental integrity of the Protocol. And this is no small feat.

Second, implementation of past agreements, decisions and commitments is central to our approach to the remaining outstanding issues; whether the review of the implementation of the Agenda 21 at WSSD, or the operationalization of the three Funds agreed in Bonn. The agreements on these Funds in Bonn, although followed by some positive pronouncements, still seem to be far from reality. We need to be assured in COP-7 that a substantive discussion on them in COP-8 will lead to agreement in principle on practical modalities for burden-sharing for their original replenishment. Within the same context, we emphasize the importance of the implementation of decisions on transfer of technology, capacity-building, economic diversification and adaptation.

Third, in a general sense, success of the Marrakesh Conference depends, in the final analysis, on due consideration for the priority areas of the developing community – to some of which I just referred. In the same vein, it should be reaffirmed, beyond doubt or illusion, that neither COP-7 nor the Johannesburg Summit is the proper forum for addressing the question of “new commitments for the developing countries”.

And finally, ratification and entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol is the best substantive contribution we can make in this process to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Our input to WSSD should, in a general sense, help the on-going global drive for sustainable development as defined and understood in Rio, including as concerns climate change. We believe the Bonn Agreements properly placed the question of climate change at the heart of sustainable development. Let us hope, and more importantly, let us resolve, that the actual implementation of those Agreements will pave the way for the achievement of the goals and objectives we have collectively agreed on. With an eye to the bigger global picture, the on-going developments as well as the still unfolding globalization process, we all need to set an example, rather now and here in COP-7, through the adoption of adequate, effective actions and measures towards promoting an

equitable and democratic global governance.

Mr. President,

The distinguished audience here hardly needs to be reminded of the rather obvious fact that the disposition of the Group of 77 and China to flexibility and compromise towards reaching consensus is equally matched – if not more so - by a principled commitment to the genuine, legitimate long-term common concerns and interests of the collectivity of the developing world. As underlined in the Group's previous statement, this is the very *raison d'être* of the Group and the indispensable platform for its unity and solidarity.

With the foregoing in perspective, let me just add that the good sense, flexibility and disposition to consensus exhibited so far by everybody – all negotiating partners, developed and developing – should be able to overcome the difficulties still hounding the process and save the political integrity of the Bonn Agreements, which we all tend to share and underscore rather unquestioningly. And on this positive note, I close my statement and wish you and the Conference every luck. This Conference cannot but complete its work, adopt all the decisions and end in success. The bright end is in clear sight. Let us grasp it. We shall be going to Johannesburg with a ratified Kyoto Protocol. And our message to WSSD; a clear, potent and unmistakable message, will be on the compelling and urgent need for genuine multilateralism across the board and international cooperation for long-term development, including the necessity of the full implementation of the Agenda 21 as well as a concomitant future-looking vision for serving the cause of sustainable development on a global scale. The ultimate success of this ten-year-old, hard-won multilateral process will no doubt carry a strong symbolic message as well; dialogue, understanding and cooperation as the only avenue before the international community to address and resolve common problems of a global nature. This could be, and in fact, should be, the common cause of us all.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.