



HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FOURTH UNFCCC CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES 11 NOVEMBER 1998

The Fourth Plenary of the COP met to hear statements from the Under-Secretary General of the UN, the President of Argentina and representatives from inter-governmental agencies, observer States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Delegates considered the final reports of the SBI and SBSTA and organizational matters.

COP PLENARY

COP-4 President, Maria Julia Alsogaray, expressed sympathy, on behalf of the COP, for the passing of the President of the Comoros.

Speaking on behalf of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary for the UN Commission for Sustainable Development, said the Kyoto Protocol offered a sustainable path for industrialized countries and demonstrated shared stewardship for the planet. He underscored the need for early ratification of the Protocol and action on issues including, technology transfer, domestic measures and scientific research. He called for a new deadline to maintain momentum and pledged UN support.

Carlos Menem, President of Argentina, said it was an honor for Argentina to host the COP. He said the Protocol had been approved by the Senate of Argentina and was under consideration in the lower house. He emphasized a clean growth strategy. At COP-5, Argentina will make a commitment to lower emissions for the period 2008 to 2012. Countries were to be permitted, he said, "to find a new way under the Convention."

The WMO (World Meteorological Organization) stated, *inter alia*, that 1998 would likely surpass 1997 as the warmest year on record and the 1997-98 El Niño was the strongest in recorded history. He emphasized attention to sinks, elaboration of the Protocol mechanisms and adaptation issues. He called for improved cooperation in addressing concerns common to the Montreal and Kyoto Protocols.

UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) stressed that least developed countries were not to be excluded from CDM projects in favor of countries with dynamic economies and more emissions. On technology transfer, he emphasized the need to enhance countries' capacity to assimilate technology.

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) encouraged early ratification of the Protocol to combat poverty and environmental degradation. Noting that developing countries were responding in meaningful ways, he highlighted the linkages between development of poor communities, poverty eradication and climate change initiatives.

UNEP (United Nations Environmental Programme) called for the establishment of a Buenos Aires plan to develop coordinated action to be enacted at COP-6. He said that UNEP supported national programs that include enhancement of public awareness, development and sharing of new technologies and creation of economies of scale for renewable energy. PARLAMENTO LATINOAMERICANO adopted a ten-point plan that included: early signature and ratification of the Protocol; early implementation of the CDM; and consideration of mechanisms, including a technological transfer mechanism. It will promote debate on climate change to influence national policies.

The WORLD BANK noted the vulnerability of developing countries to climate change and reiterated the Bank's commitment to promotion of sustainable development. Key initiatives include collaboration with the GEF, funding AIJ projects, and establishment of a funding mechanism with public and private sector resources.

UNESCO said there was an ethical need to act promptly, stressed the imperative for the world community to accelerate its commitments and underscored the need to promote education, public awareness and training programmes. GEF (Global Environment Facility) said the replenishment of the facility would support developing countries in working towards the fulfillment of the FCCC and the CBD.

The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) said the Third Assessment Report would: cover scientific technical, economic and social issues; be policy relevant and not policy prescriptive; and place climate change in the social context. At the request of SBSTA, IPCC has expanded its work programme and will face budgetary constraints. He called for increased contributions to enable scheduled completion of work. OLADE (Latin American Energy Organization) said its activities include GHG estimations, energy efficiency promotion, and development of technology for new and renewable energy.

The OECD said it aimed at enhancing cooperation with non-member countries. Its work includes: peer review of domestic policies and measures; establishment of international development mechanisms; and increasing the efficacy of compliance mechanisms.



IAE (International Energy Agency) underscored the need to engage the energy sector in the FCCC process. He called for the elaboration of the Kyoto mechanisms into practical working arrangements.

SBSTA Chair Kok Kee Chow provided a report on the body's activities. He indicated that SBSTA agreed on five draft decisions, including: research and systematic observation (FCCC/CP/1998/L.4); scientific and methodological aspects of the proposal by Brazil (FCCC/SBSTA/1998/L.7); land-use change and forestry (FCCC/CP/1998.L.5); impact of single projects on emissions in the commitment period (FCCC/CP/1998/L.8); and the relationship between efforts to protect the stratospheric ozone layer and efforts to safeguard the global climate system; (FCCC/CP/1998/L.7). The draft decisions were later adopted by the COP without amendment. A draft decision on the development and transfer of technology was prepared, although the Chair noted that two Parties have concerns that will likely be raised in the COP (FCCC/CP/1998/L.15).

The Chair described the results of joint SBSTA and SBI sessions. A text of a possible decision on activities implemented jointly (AIJ) contains some brackets (FCCC/CP/1998/CRP.2). No decision on the flexibility mechanisms was reached and two draft texts will be forwarded to the COP (FCCC/CP/1998/MISC.7 and Add.1). On preparations for COP/MOP-1, the text retains brackets and blank sections will be filled in later as information becomes available (FCCC/CP/1998/CRP.4). He indicated the group had a strong interest in compliance and a body may be needed to continue this work.

The President asked if a decision on the transfer of technology could be adopted. The US said it was important to ensure consistency between this text and one concerning the GEF. He requested that the item be held open. Delegates agreed to address the issue on Friday afternoon.

SBI Chair Bakary Kante presented the report of the SBI (FCCC/SBI/1998/L.2). Regarding the calendar of meetings, he said there was agreement on holding two meetings per year. He said the draft decisions on: the calendar of meetings of Convention bodies (FCCC/CP/L.14); national communications from Annex I Parties (FCCC/CP/1998/L.10); review of information communicated under Article 12 (FCCC/CP/1998/L.11); second review on adequacy of Article 4.2(a) and (b) (FCCC/CP/1998/L.12); and implementation of Articles 4.8 and 4.9 (Decision3/CP.3 and Articles 2.3 and 3.14 of the Kyoto Protocol) (FCCC/CP/1998/L.9) have been forwarded to the COP since agreement on their adoption had not been reached. He informed the COP that SBI recommended a draft decision on administrative and financial matters (FCCC/CP/1998/L.13), which the COP adopted.

The COP-4 President proposed to convene a group of friends of the president at the ministerial level to address the outstanding issues from the SBI and SBSTA. Executive Secretary Michael Zammit Cutajar informed delegates that Jordan has offered to host COP-5. He said a final decision had not been reached because financial matters are under discussion.

TURKEY said it had presented the FCCC to Parliament for ratification. However, its Annex I and II status did not conform to the country's economic circumstances. She requested resolution of this issue at COP-5. LIBYA expressed hope that the international community would prevent adverse economic impacts from response measures. Sanctions have impeded environmental improvements to oil production facilities, which violates international agreements.

FORO DEL BUEN AYRE said the challenge facing COP-4 will lead to new roles for NGOs. He described efforts to improve Latin American regional NGO cooperation and supported local level action. GLOBE (Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment) called on certain countries to end their "dance of the doomed" and acknowledge that without equity there can be no bankable success.

He sought a contraction budget with a convergence mechanism that sets targets for all. Delegates could, on Friday the 13th, face a "full stop COP" if they fail to include language of equity into work programmes. ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) highlighted the potential of trade unions to effect change in the workplace. He said mitigation policies and measures should minimize adverse effects on workers and transition strategies were necessary.

ICC (International Chamber of Commerce) and WBCSD (World Business Council for Sustainable Development) underscored the role of the private sector and the potential of voluntary initiatives. They stressed, *inter alia*: transparency; low transaction costs; incentives for early action; fungibility; additionality without barriers; and complementarity when cost effective.

ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) outlined its Cities for Climate Protection Campaign, which supports, *inter alia*, domestic policies and measures, increased support to local governments and complementarity. The ARGENTINE MAYORS' ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM noted the recommendations of the first Mayors' Environmental Forum held in November 1998, which highlighted, *inter alia*: municipal autonomy; local environmental policies; federal support; and public participation.

KLIMA-BÜNDNIS (Climate Alliance), an association of European cities committed to a 50% reduction of GHG by 2020, has partnerships with indigenous peoples in the Amazon. He highlighted respect and cultural diversity and expressed concern over threats to the existence of forest-dependent communities, including human rights issues.

CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK - LATIN AMERICA said that the COP should recognize the failure of developed countries to reduce GHG emissions, acknowledge that non-Annex I Parties were undertaking significant efforts and determine that a global emissions budget should be equitably shared. IUCN (World Conservation Union) discussed the link between the issue of biodiversity and climate change and called on the CBD and the FCCC to work together.

BCSE (Business Council for Sustainable Energy) and the EUROPEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL FOR A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FUTURE called for the adoption of work plans with deadlines for each flexibility mechanism, the implementation of a strong liability system and support for model frameworks to encourage technological agreements between developed and developing countries.

CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK - EUROPE stated that domestic actions by industrialized countries should be furthered and a strict compliance regime established. Flexibility mechanisms should not be a way for Parties to evade domestic action and nuclear energy is not an appropriate solution. FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL linked GHG reduction to world peace and urged, *inter alia*, more concern for ecosystems and small island states, equity, rejection of consumerism and reverence for all creation.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As a result of the often bitter debate and "bracket escalation," and the length of Tuesday night's session, several delegates stated they were disappointed with the meeting. They hoped that this experience would not thwart the progress of the negotiations, but rather inspire a reassessment of the deliberations and aspirations for the COP.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT: The High Level Segment will begin at 10:00 am in Plenary I.