

## **Welcome to COP 7**

This Conference is proof of the importance that the Government of Morocco attaches to the global threat of climate change and its determination to do its part in a multilateral strategy to combat it. In expressing my respect and gratitude to our hosts, I hope that their example will convince other governments to show similar leadership in the future.

It is also the first time that a UNFCCC Conference of the Parties is held in Africa. Africa has contributed little to the build up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere over the centuries.

Yet, widespread poverty, recurrent droughts and floods, and dependence on rainfed agriculture, forestry and fisheries make this continent and its people most vulnerable to climate change and limit their capacity to adapt to it.

The COP 6 Bonn Agreements sent a strong political message of the will to move forward with the Kyoto Protocol and strengthen the commitment of industrialized countries to support developing countries.

Now this Marrakech conference must seal that message in a package of decisions that will pave the way to the ratification of the Protocol by developed countries in the next months sufficient to bring it into force by next year's World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

The Government of Morocco has invested in the facilities for an effective negotiation, including this website. I am certain that this city, with the warmth of its citizens and its rich cultural heritage and beauty, will prove an inspiring and productive setting for all.

Michael Zammit Cutajar