



**Opening of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10)
Buenos Aires, 6 December 2004**

**Statement by Joke Waller-Hunter
Executive Secretary,
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Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome all delegates to this tenth session of the Conference of the Parties. We are extremely grateful to our host country, Argentina, for inviting us again to this beautiful and majestic city of Buenos Aires. The warm welcome that you offer us is highly appreciated.

I extend my sincere congratulations to you, Minister González García, on your election as President of COP 10. I am confident that under your leadership we are guaranteed a productive and successful meeting. Please be assured, Sir, of the full support of the secretariat during your presidency.

I also take this opportunity to thank Minister Persányi for his able presidency over the past year. COP 9 produced solid results in many areas. We look forward to welcoming Minister Persányi next week.

As the great William Shakespeare wrote: “An honest tale speeds best being plainly told.” And I will follow his advice.

At this COP, we celebrate two major milestones in the climate change process – the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the forthcoming entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. After the deposit by the Russian Federation of its instrument of ratification the Protocol will become legally binding on its Parties in 72 days from today, on 16 February 2005. The countdown has started.

Both milestones provide us with renewed political momentum, giving an excellent opportunity to look back with pride and forward with hope.

To assist in looking back, we prepared a publication: *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: The First Ten Years*. In a way, this publication can be seen as the report on implementation that the COP requested the secretariat to prepare in 1995. It is “our common history”, if you allow me this variant to Mrs. Brundtland’s bestseller. I am pleased to present you, Mr. President, with your copy. Distinguished delegates will find their copies on their desks. Additional copies can be obtained at the Climate Change Kiosk.

A few highlights would be in order:

1) Between 1990 and 2000, annual greenhouse gas emissions in developed countries fell by 6.6 per cent bringing them below 1990 level as requested in Article 4.2(a). However, this was largely due to an almost 40 per cent fall in emissions in countries with economies in transition, which more than offset a more than 7 per cent rise in emissions in highly industrialized countries.

2) Emissions appear to have fallen in most sectors in the developed countries, particularly in energy and industrial processes, although emissions from transport rose considerably. In international transport, emissions from shipping have remained relatively stable, while those from aviation have been climbing. These findings highlight key issues for the future.

3) Emission intensity of the world's economy has fallen, as emissions are growing more slowly than GDP.

4) National governments are addressing the challenges of climate change, each in their own unique national circumstances. Mitigation and adaptation strategies are being implemented in developed and developing countries, and are becoming more closely integrated in sustainable development. In developed countries, trends show that new climate-friendly technologies are being used more widely and businesses are now seriously involved, especially when they see "win-win" opportunities. Research and development of new technologies is being taken up. Similarly, developing countries are starting to incorporate climate change considerations while striving to achieve the overriding goal of poverty reduction.

5) Public awareness, support and action are increasing, as governments, NGOs, and businesses promote and advertise more climate-friendly policies, activities and products.

Although the Convention laid the foundation for the concerted international action taken during the past 10 years and will continue to show the way forward through its ultimate objective, the Kyoto Protocol provides concrete first steps for meeting the long-term challenge.

- Over thirty industrialized countries will be legally bound to meet quantitative targets for reducing or limiting their greenhouse gas emissions
- International emissions trading will become a reality, creating a new market with a new commodity – carbon
- The clean development mechanism (CDM), a key asset of the Protocol, has already become fully operational thanks to its prompt start. On 18 November, the first CDM project was registered – a project in Brazil designed to reduce emissions of methane from a landfill in the Rio de Janeiro area

- With the CDM in place, the Protocol's Adaptation Fund, established in 2001, will receive funds that can be used to assist developing countries to adapt to the negative effects of climate change.

COP 8 put adaptation in the spotlight, by adopting the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development. Ever since, evidence on the need to adapt has increased. This COP is expected to take the next step and start spelling out in practical terms what needs to be done and by whom. The Convention process has an important role to play at the international level, but so do other international organizations. Effective approaches to international cooperation on adaptation need to be developed. At the national level, governments will be taking steps to identify vulnerability and risk, and developing policies to reduce these. Support to developing countries must become more concrete. It is encouraging that under the various modalities of the Global Environment Facility around USD 100 million is now available to support adaptation activities.

So, the celebrations should not distract us from the many tasks ahead. On the contrary, much needs to be done, at the country level and through international cooperation. As a secretariat we stand ready to support you and your process, to the extent that available resources allow. I do not want to spoil the party, but I have to issue some words of grave concern over the current financial situation. The depreciation of the United States dollar against the Euro continues to put tremendous pressure on the Convention's already limited financial resources. Maintaining activities while containing expenditures within the budget is posing a considerable challenge. Efforts are being made to curtail costs. Recruitment is being delayed, and existing staff, including top managers, are absorbing extra work. I may not be able to guarantee that the customary high quality of documentation and other secretariat tasks will not suffer or that work will not be delayed. You will address these issues in more detail in the SBI and I trust that delegations will examine them seriously and find solutions.

I would like to thank Parties who have contributed to the Trust Fund for Participation. Funding has been sufficient to support participation for this COP although, despite serious fund-raising activities, unfortunately not to the desired level of two participants from the least developed countries and small island developing States. With COP/MOP 1 forthcoming I encourage Parties to increase support to the Trust Fund.

Mr. President,

In the 10 years since the entry into force of the Convention, solid consensus has developed that climate change is one of the main challenges of the 21st century. Yet 10 years is a short time in the life of a global issue. In fact, the reaction of the global community to an absolutely new challenge has been remarkably swift in historical terms. We can look back with pride on the steps we have taken.

However, the clock is ticking, and in 2005 we must grasp the nettle of designing climate strategy beyond 2012. What can we learn from our experience that will illuminate the way ahead? Will it be a linear progression or will there be a choice of pathways to suit different interests and different national circumstances? How can we convince economic actors to engage in the climate negotiations in a proactive manner? How can demand for

clean air and lower fuel bills be mobilized to support climate friendly policies? How can legitimate concerns with negative economic impacts be addressed?

The Convention's principles remain an essential guide to our forward vision. Our strategy must be equitable to be effective. Those with the capacity must be in the lead; those with the resources must assist. Responsibilities are common, as well as differentiated. All must be seen to be moving in the same direction, even if at different speeds on different routes. And ways must be found to compare effort, so that all are seen to be pulling their weight, pulling their oar in the same boat. And let me quote Shakespeare once again:

“There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune...”

Let's ride this tide together.

Thank you.
