

Speech by the Minister for Lasting Development at the occasion of the Presentation of the Rio Conventions Calendar 2006

Convention - framework on climate change.

Montreal 7th December 2005

Ladies and gentlemen,
Good day to you all.
Ia orana (Hello in Tahitian)

Firstly, on behalf of myself and the president of French Polynesia, I wish to thank the French authorities for welcoming us to the heart of their delegation, and the organisers of this meeting who have allowed me to be amongst you this evening for the launch of the 2006 edition of the Rio Conventions Calendar. The French Polynesian government, whom I am representing, wishes for climate protection to be inscribed in its debates from this point on.

My presence at this conference signifies this wish..

The original ruling of autonomy of Polynesia, a collective overseas territory at the heart of the French Republic, finds itself in a unique situation: only the Rio Convention applies, at the exclusion of the Kyoto protocol.

At the heart of the South Pacific, French Polynesia wishes to promote its long lasting development. This can only happen by taking climate change into account.

In effect, on a seaborne territory of 5 million km², a surface equivalent to that of Europe, our 118 inhabited islands make up less than 5000km² of land for a population of 260,000 inhabitants, of which the majority are under 24 years old. Participating in the funding of the Rio Conventions Calendar is our first step to contribute towards the fight against climate change, which is vital for all, in particular island states such as our own.

As we have seen in Tuvalu, the rising water levels of the Pacific Ocean would lead to the low Polynesian islands disappearing. In order to avoid this we must all take action immediately.

Furthermore, Polynesian economic development relies on tourism, pearl farming, fishing and agriculture: these activities are just as sensitive to the impact of climate change.

In order to better understand the impacts of these changes, the government will create an observatory for biodiversity and climate change in French Polynesia in 2006.

Finally, the French Polynesian government is putting in place restrictive measures in order to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore adapt to the consequences of climate change.

The first chapter of this commitment is a massive financial investment from our collective in 2006 in favour of the development of renewable energy sources.

Only a collective conscience addressing climate change will enable island states to construct a long lasting future for themselves.

As we say at home: Maururu, la orana e manava!
(Thank you, hello and welcome!)

Thank you for joining us and I wish you a pleasant evening.