



**Opening of the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9)
Milan, 1 December 2003**

**Statement by Joke Waller-Hunter
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On behalf of all my colleagues in the secretariat, I take great pleasure in welcoming all delegates to the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties. We are extremely grateful to the Government of our host country, Italy, for having invited us to the famous city of Milan. The warm welcome that you, together with the Regione Lombardia and the city of Milano, offer to us is highly appreciated.

I extend my sincere congratulations to you, Minister Persányi, on your election as President of COP 9. I am confident that your leadership will turn this COP into a very productive and successful meeting. Please be assured, Sir, of the full support of the secretariat during your presidency.

May I also take this opportunity to thank Minister Baalu, who unfortunately cannot be with us today, for his able Presidency of COP 8, which gave birth to the Delhi Declaration; the Government of India gave a successful follow-up to this Declaration only three weeks ago at the Climate Technology Bazaar and associated events in Delhi. May I count on our friend, Mr. Viswanath, to convey our thanks to Minister Baalu?

The Technology Bazaar was one of the many, many activities, directly relating to our process or otherwise in support of the objective of the Convention, that have taken place since COP 8. It is encouraging that the uncertainty about the date of entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol has not slowed the momentum for action. The unprecedented high number of requests for side events here at COP 9 also bears witness to this.

Let me briefly highlight some of the achievements of the past twelve months in conjunction with the agenda for this COP 9. While doing so, I trust that Parties will realize that adequate resources are needed to meet the expectations on programme delivery as a follow-up to decisions taken at previous COPs and by this COP 9. It is, therefore, essential that the budget discussions will result in a realistic match of demand and supply.

Let me start with the national communications from non-Annex I Parties. Much was done following the adoption at COP 8 of the new guidelines for the national communications of non-Annex I countries. A manual was developed in cooperation with the Consultative Group on National Communications from non-Annex I Parties (CGE) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its implementing agencies as a practical tool; this manual also includes references on

where to find further information. The GEF agreed on expedited procedures for financial support for the second round of National Communications. I would like to emphasize, as I did two weeks ago in the GEF Council meeting, the strategic role that national communications can play. Not only are they the principal reporting tool to our Convention, but they are also potentially strategic tools for helping countries integrate climate change into their sustainable development agendas. The experiences, both good and bad, gained in our first round make me optimistic that these documents and the process of preparing them can lead to a closer link between national communications and GEF-supported projects and thus to the strengthening of many concrete climate change activities throughout the developing world.

Generally speaking, cooperation with the GEF and its implementing agencies is intensifying, which is important when it comes to national implementation. I look forward to the first progress report of the new CEO of the GEF as the GEF is taking a new approach on two issues which are of paramount importance to our Convention, and which feature prominently on the agendas for SBI and SBSTA: capacity-building and adaptation. In follow-up to the Delhi Declaration, the GEF has developed a strategic approach to adaptation that is now integrated into its Business Plan. I trust that COP 9 will contribute to further shaping the adaptation agenda in our process, including work on methodologies. It is encouraging that the scientific community is increasing its efforts on adaptation, for example through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the IPCC) and in the Vulnerability and Adaptation Resource Group (VARG), which came out clearly in the UNEP workshop on the science of adaptation that was held three weeks ago in New Delhi.

These issues, capacity-building and adaptation, also offer great opportunities for enhanced cooperation with our sister Rio conventions, the importance of which is underlined in the General Assembly resolution on climate change that is currently in its final stages of negotiation. I expect the Joint Liaison Group to actively continue identifying ways and means that facilitate enhanced cooperation on implementation at the national level.

The Least Developed Countries Fund is up and running; the LDCs are moving from the stage of developing National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) to their implementation, and the LEG deserves a great deal of credit for progress achieved. At this session priorities will be set for the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). Thus implementation of these elements of the Marrakesh accords seems to be well on track.

Mr. President, we now have full sets of emission data from most Annex I Parties for the year 2000, which have been rigorously reviewed. The picture for the period 1990-2000 is mixed, as you will have seen from the reports. Although the intermediate aim of the convention, stabilizing the emissions of greenhouse gases in 2000 at 1990 levels, was largely met, this was mainly due to the decline in economic performance in the Parties with economies in transition. Looking ahead, the projections show an increase in emissions for Annex I Parties in 2010 compared to 1990 levels, based on scenarios of measures to be taken domestically.

The COP will consider the performance of the Annex I Parties in limiting and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, based on the information that our secretariat has received and analysed. This gives Parties the opportunity to conduct the plenary discussion on the implementation of commitments that many have waited for.

In this context, I am pleased to inform you that we are constantly updating our data, from the inventories and from the national communications, and improving our information systems, so that we can provide an authoritative database service on greenhouse gas emissions from all Parties.

There has been encouraging progress on the Kyoto mechanisms since Marrakesh. In anticipation of the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, emissions-trading activities at the regional, national, sub-national and company level have advanced rapidly and we have entered a period of “learning by doing”. New markets are emerging. At the moment they are largely unconnected, which may cause a problem over time. But once the Kyoto Protocol has entered into force, it will provide an overarching framework. Progress on registries and the transaction log is expected at this COP.

The COP will also consider the progress report by the Executive Board of the Clean Development Mechanism, which clearly highlights that we have moved from the stage of ideas to reality. Given progress made with the institutional set up for accreditation and with the approval of various methodologies, the Board expects to have the first projects registered by early next year. This is certainly a landmark performance.

It will be interesting to monitor over time how the CDM projects will contribute to technology transfer. Looking at the work of the Expert Group on Technology Transfer (EGTT), another creation of Marrakesh, I get the impression that we have entered a new era of discussion on technology transfer, searching for practical approaches. The fact that the high-level event on enabling environments for technology transfer early next week is co-organized by the business community is a telling example of a new spirit of cooperation.

It is evident that, if the objectives of the Convention and the Protocol are to be met, we need full deployment of existing technologies, and, in addition, active research and development of new, innovative technologies, that will have the potential to create the low carbon economy that we need to aim for over time. Among several other initiatives, the Hydrogen Partnership, concluded only two weeks ago in Washington, to unite a number of industrialized and developing countries in their endeavours to move in a challenging new direction, is an obvious case in point.

Sound metrics, rooted in scientifically sound methodologies, remain at the heart of the work of the COP. Only then can the integrity of the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol be guaranteed. I look forward to this COP reaching conclusions on how to include afforestation and reforestation in the CDM, so that the CDM rule book will be complete, and forest-related methodologies can be considered by the Executive Board. I also look forward to agreement on a common reporting format for land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) in the national communications. They are part of a more comprehensive agenda on forest issues that the SBSTA will look into as part of its work programme. More generally, the SBSTA is facing the challenging task of linking the scientific recommendations of the IPCC to the policy agenda that needs developing over the years to come.

Mr. President, these introductory remarks were meant to convey that here at the time of COP 9, there is a high level of enthusiasm and ambition, from the Parties, from the many

stakeholders, and from the secretariat. I trust that this session of the COP will take place in that spirit.

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