

(Translated from Spanish)

Statement by His Excellency Mr Ginés González García, President of COP 10

This is the third time in a row that it has been my responsibility to open a key meeting for the future of climate regulation, in my capacity as President of the tenth Conference of the Parties.

Buenos Aires, Kyoto and Bonn are way stations along what ought to be a quick march towards a solution to the problem of global climate change.

I do not, however, wish to address only the political authorities, negotiators and experts who regularly attend these sessions.

In today's global society, it is the members of each national society who are ultimately responsible for our collective destiny, and I wish to address them, too.

You must know that much has been done to find a solution but today, for a variety of reasons, we are not doing all that we could.

Our task is being made more difficult by doubt, pettiness, distrust and shortsightedness.

Producing a consolidated set of international climate regulations is a continuing process that is confronting us with fresh challenges and potential pitfalls.

The agreements leading up to the Kyoto Protocol, and those made possible by the fact that the Protocol is now in force, are extraordinary achievements.

But we are convinced that we have to keep pressing ahead with the utmost urgency, and every one of us must step up our efforts to mitigate climate change to the rest of our abilities.

Today the challenge facing us is to design and construct together the edifices that will come after Kyoto while the international regulatory system is still divided, since the United States and Australia are outside the Protocol and may opt to remain so -- a fact which multilateral negotiations have not been able to take fully into account.

Hence our first obligation is to develop a system that is acceptable to all parties and takes a long-term view.

To do this, we will have to trace a practical, viable path along which environmental regulation can gradually evolve by means of concrete action and meaningful agreements.

To dispel doubts and tone down reciprocal distrust, our first task must be to complete and begin to put into effect the Buenos Aires programme of work on adaptation and response measures in order to tackle the adverse effects of global climate change which are already inevitable.

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In order to do this, we must recognise that the effects of climate change are many and complex. The programme must therefore include arrangements for providing assistance with adaptation and help in the event of disasters provoked by climate change, arrangements which take account of these various dimensions.

If the Buenos Aires programme leads to comprehensive, effective arrangements for adaptation, the introduction of these arrangements will address the central concern of a large number of developing countries, which is to secure significant financial and technical involvement from the industrialised countries, thus helping to cope with the problems posed by the impact of global climate change.

That being so, discussions on a mitigation agenda for the post-Kyoto scenario ought to take up the developing countries' concern over adaptation.

But the greater trust that would stem from a genuine long-term commitment by the developing countries does not end with flexible negotiations over financial adaptation mechanisms, vital though these may be.

The better-off countries must also make good on their promises and provide resources for the various funds set up to address different climate-change-related issues.

Another matter of no less concern has to do with proper backing for the clean development mechanism, not just its current operational needs.

The negotiations we have to get under way must avoid any backsliding in the carbon market, ensuring its long-term existence, but also helping to remove the barriers that prevent the clean development mechanism from meshing fully with regional or national emissions-trading systems.

We must ensure that the rollout of the clean development mechanism makes proper provision for the technological dimensions of projects, that perverse incentives are not allowed to continue and that initiatives are not concentrated in just a few countries.

Displaying the necessary political will to give effect to decisions on these issues is crucial if distrust is to be dispelled and it is to be made easier for developing countries to be part of the future post-Kyoto edifices.

Such signals are also vital if the developing countries are to make substantive input into the consideration of the design options for the future regulatory system, including the various levels and types of commitment.

Commitment by the developing countries will inevitably be linked to the possibility of ensuring sustainable development and to the assimilation of energy-intensity-reducing technology without limiting growth or the spread of social benefits.

The transfer of such mitigating technology is a key issue and must lie at the core of mechanisms designed to ensure greater participation by countries not included in Annex I, particularly the relatively well-developed countries. At the same time, in the countries that make such transfer possible should be given greater consideration as expressed in their future commitments.

Even if the proposed edifice is -- to maximise the effect of mitigation efforts -- extremely flexible, it is very difficult to arrive at a formula which fully satisfies all parties; what is at stake here, however, is our common destiny, and everyone will have to give up something in order to be certain of the future.

The European Union, Japan, Canada and other developed countries must continue to lead efforts under the Kyoto Protocol, but we must remain open to all options in our search for solutions.

I am fully aware that the task ahead of us is a complex one, but I am convinced that consensus solutions can be found and that we can pick up the pace.

Mankind has coped successfully with other critical moments; we must remember the generosity, the intelligence and the perseverance that were put into doing so. The demands made of us now are no less than those made then.

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