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INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR
A FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
Fourth session
WORKING GROUP I
Geneva, 9-20 December 1991
Agenda item 2 (a)

Joint statement of the Group of 77, made by its Chairman (Ghana) at
the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
for a Framework Convention on Climate Change

Geneva, (9-20 December 1991)

1. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to make a statement which sets out certain elements which should be incorporated in the text on the Principles of this Convention, it being understood that this is without prejudice to the right of each delegation member of this group to articulate further more specific formulations on the elements dealt with here as well as to propose additional elements both individually and collectively. I would also request on behalf of the group that this statement be circulated as a text of this session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

2. I will now read out the elements for incorporation:

(a) The principle of the sovereignty of States shall be adhered to and strictly respected in all fields of international cooperation, including that for protection of the global climate.

(b) The right to development is an inalienable human right. All peoples have an equal right in matters relating to living standards. Economic development is the prerequisite for adopting measures to address climate change. The net emissions of developing countries must grow to meet their social and economic development needs.

(c) Protection of the global climate against human-induced change should proceed in an integrated manner with economic development in the light of the specific conditions of each country, without prejudice to the socio-economic development of developing countries. Measures to guard against climate change should be integrated into national development programmes taking into account that environmental standards valid for developed countries may have inappropriate and unwarranted social and economic costs in developing countries.

(d) All States have an obligation to protect the climate for the benefit of present and future generations of mankind on the basis of intra-generational as well as inter-generational equity. This obligation shall be carried out with different time-frames for implementation in accordance with common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities between developing and developed countries and taking fully into account that the largest part of emissions of greenhouse gases have been originating from developed countries and those countries have the main responsibility in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof.

(e) The parties shall give full consideration to the specific needs and special circumstances of developing country parties, especially those developing countries which are particularly vulnerable to the adverse consequences of climate change and also those developing countries which would have to bear a disproportionate or abnormal burden under the Convention.

(f) In order to achieve sustainable development in all countries and to meet the needs of present and future generations, precautionary measures to meet the climate challenge must anticipate, prevent, attack or minimize the causes of, and mitigate the adverse consequences of, environmental degradation that might result from climate change. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent such environmental degradation. The measures adopted should take into account different socio-economic contexts.

(g) The need to improve the international economic environment for the developing countries and to promote their sustained economic development are prerequisites for enabling developing countries to participate effectively in the international efforts to protect the global environment including climate protection.

In this context, new, adequate and additional financial resources and transfers of and access to environmentally safe and sound technology on most favourable, concessional and preferential terms shall have to be channelled to developing countries in order to enable their full participation in global efforts for the protection of the climate.

States shall promote an open and balanced multilateral trading system. Except on the basis of a decision by the Conference of Parties no country or group of countries shall introduce barriers to trade on the basis of claims related to climate change.

3. The issues of economic development and equity are vital for the conclusion of a Convention in which the developing countries can participate. Prospects for arriving at a consensus depend upon these factors being given the importance they deserve to arrive at a balanced result. The developing countries cannot be expected to accept any formulation that would institutionally help perpetuate, however well intentioned the motives of some parties, the present economic disparity amongst the members of the international community.
