

**Statement by Ambassador Bagher Asadi, Chairman of the Group of 77 (Islamic Republic of Iran), at the Opening Meeting of the Seventh Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

**Marrakesh, Morocco, 29 October 2001**

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Mr. President,

It is indeed a great honour and distinct pleasure for the Chairman of the Group of 77 to have the unique opportunity to address the Seventh Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, at the very beginning of its work, in this beautiful historical city and particularly under your presidency. While commending the Government and People of Morocco for hosting this important conference and for the excellent arrangements and extending the most sincere, heartfelt felicitations of the Group of 77 and China to you, Mr. Minister, for the prestigious Office you have just assumed, let me seize the moment to assure you of our full cooperation in the collective enterprise ahead of us all. I should as well avail of this opportunity to place on record our deep gratitude and appreciation to Minister Ian Pronk, distinguished President of COP-6, for his perseverance and his tireless, indefatigable efforts throughout his tenure and, no less importantly, for his marvelous performance in shepherding the achievement of the Bonn Agreements. Thanks are also due Mr. Michael Zammit Cutajar and his colleagues in the Convention Secretariat for all their invaluable efforts and contribution, substantive and otherwise, for COP-7.

Mr. President,

We are just beginning a very important international gathering within the framework of an on-going decade-old multilateral process towards implementing the Climate Change Convention. But we are meeting here under a quite different global atmosphere, when as a result of the tragic events of September 11 and its consequences the need for genuine multilateralism across the board has never been as compelling and urgent. Yes, as Mr. Pronk just said, multilateralism works, based, of course, on international cooperation, dialogue and understanding. The fact that COP-7 is taking place under these changed and yet charged circumstances is very important in itself; what might have been considered a mission impossible, should, by the end of the next week, be a mission completed – a successful *fait accompli* of the international community.

Mr. President,

We have come here to Marrakesh with a great, historical achievement in our hands – the Political Agreements we sealed in Bonn less than three months ago. There and then all of us, those engaged in that long marathon of negotiations, resolved to prepare the grounds for the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol by the year 2002, and as all of us tend to understand, before the Johannesburg Summit. And once the overall Political Agreements were reached, we started with the next stage of our work; that is, translating the agreements into solid legal language on various crunch issues. Well, thanks to everybody's spirit of cooperation and sense of pragmatism and flexibility – indispensable ingredients for any successful negotiation – we managed to make progress in a number of important areas. Document FCCC/CP/2001/5/Add.1 contains decisions in those areas where negotiations were completed and consensus was reached, and which have been forwarded to this Conference for adoption. Moreover, as we all remember, there were a number of other equally important areas where progress was made but the work was not finished. Document FCCC/CP/2001/5/Add.2 contains the draft decisions which have been forwarded to COP-7 for elaboration, completion and adoption. As you underlined, Mr. President, this is the central part of the work of COP-7.

Mr. President,

This is a rather short statement. I will not engage in a long, detailed expose of the positions of the Group of 77 and China on various issues we have before us in COP-7. Instead, I merely suffice to lay out a number of overarching considerations, which we would like to share with you and our negotiating partners quite early on.

First and foremost, we consider the Bonn Agreements an honourable deal that should be respected by all; we remain faithful to it and call on all other partners to do so. Such an approach by all is absolutely imperative for this Conference to achieve ultimate success of this unique multilateral process and give practical effect to those Agreements.

Second, and closely related to the above assertion, is the imperative for everybody to avoid any temptation for re-opening of the Bonn Agreements, including through resort to interpretation of the agreed language. Every effort should be made to resolve the outstanding differences in a manner that would not undermine the political integrity of the Bonn Agreements. All of us are fully, and yet conscioustiously, cognizant of the fact that some of the differences on the table, whether on Compliance, Mechanisms or LULUCF or under Article 5, 7 and 8, may seem quite difficult. Nevertheless, I remain confident that everybody in the house, both developed and developing, concurs with me on the fundamental necessity of preserving the integrity of the Agreements and completing the work here. It is do-able, hence, it should be done. As implied a little while earlier, our detailed positions will be brought to the table as soon as actual negotiations on the draft decisions and other issues commence.

Mr. President,

Your good self represent a developing country, therefore, you are fully familiar with the concerns of your fellow members of the Group of 77. That is exactly why I deem it necessary to underline right here, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, a point of caution - that the reports before us, or for that matter, items of the agenda, should not be utilized in any possible manner to inject into our deliberations the rather stale question of new commitments for the developing world. Neither COP-7 nor the Johannesburg Summit is the proper forum for such an untimely suggestion, which, if nothing else, would prove extremely divisive in an atmosphere requiring good-will and disposition to consensus. Our collective endeavours here are geared towards the further effective implementation of the Climate Change Convention as well as making the Protocol ratifiable. Our expectations for the full implementation of the Agenda 21 and fulfillment of past promises and commitments are yet to be realized. It is in such a context that I have to state, in very unequivocal terms, that our disposition to compromise and consensus – based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities - is, as everybody knows, equally matched by our principled, if not jealous, guarding of the genuine, legitimate long-term common concerns and interests of the collectivity of the developing world. This is the indispensable platform for our unity and participation in all multilateral processes, including the climate change process. To this end, here in Marrakesh, we rely on the good sense of our partners in the North and your able stewardship.

I close my statement, as always, on positive note, and with a very clear assertion. The Group of 77 and China has come to Marrakesh to help crown the Bonn achievement with yet another, higher stage of international, intergovernmental agreement that would ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol by the time we walk into the Johannesburg Conference. Our success here will indeed send a potent message and make a substantive contribution to that ten-year review process. We are here to negotiate, in all earnestness and with good faith. We expect the same from our partners in the North. And none of us shall be found wanting in this great collective enterprise. To this end, we rely on dialogue and mutual understanding – so beautifully underscored in your opening statement – and equally on your diplomatic savvy and political acumen, Mr. President.

Thank you very much.

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