

Statement by Ambassador Bagher Asadi, Chairman of the Group of 77 (Islamic Republic of Iran), before the Second Committee of the General Assembly on Agenda item 98 (f): Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

New York, 28 November 2001

Mr. Chairman,

Speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, let me express, first and foremost, our deep appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Michel Zammit Cutajar, distinguished Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for an excellent introductory statement, particularly with regard to the Marrakech Accords as well as the institutional linkages between the UNFCCC Secretariat and the United Nations and the status of the global climate change process. I should as well thank the Secretary-General for a good, concise report.

Mr. Chairman,

This is a rather short statement. Having started with the question of institutional linkages between the UNFCCC and the United Nations, let me add that these linkages have been functioning well and should continue as in the past. I am sure colleagues here concur with me on the importance of the institutional linkage and simultaneously appreciate the independent functioning of the Secretariat. Therefore, we support the continuation of the current institutional linkage and related administrative arrangements for a further five-year period, as proposed in the report and also contained in the draft resolution we intend to submit to the Committee.

Our meeting here today at the second Committee takes place in the backdrop of a very important development in the global climate change process. This 10-year-old process has entered a new phase after the successful meeting in Bonn back in July and the COP-7 held just two weeks ago in Marrakech. With the historic achievements and agreements reached first in Bonn and then completed and sealed in Marrakech, the international community rose to the challenge of making the embattled Kyoto Protocol ratifiable before the Johannesburg Summit. This is indeed the best substantive – and if I may add, symbolic – contribution that the Kyoto Protocol process could have made to the Johannesburg Summit. What is expected now is to witness the expeditious ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by Annex-I Parties so that we would all go to Johannesburg with the Kyoto Protocol in force. In the wake of this historic development, it could be said now, with a sense of certitude and satisfaction, that the climate change process has got new blood in its veins. The Climate Change Convention in general and the Buenos Aires Plan of Action in particular now stand a real chance of effective implementation. Let us undertake, all of us, collectively, to make that a reality.

Mr. Chairman,

This is not the proper occasion for me to engage in an in-depth analysis of the substance of the agreements and decisions in Bonn and Marrakech. Instead, I merely suffice to assert that the Marrakech Accords, to some of which Michael referred, represent an overall balance, where concerns and interests of different quarters have been accommodated in a general sense. Equally important that every effort was made to preserve the environmental integrity of this multilateral environmental agreement. Of course, one could always speculate on the contours of a perfect, ideal agreement, that may exist on paper only and, rarely, if ever, as the practical, tangible outcome of a multilateral negotiating process.

Apart from substance and speculation on what might or could have been, the long, tortuous process ending

with the Marrakech Accords carries a very important lesson and message; multilateralism and international cooperation work. I believe recent negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol have renewed hope and optimism in the value of dialogue, understanding, engagement and cooperation in addressing such global issues and problems as climate change and resolving seemingly intractable difficulties. And on a related note, as is generally acknowledged, the Bonn and Marrakech agreements could have hardly been achieved without the positive, constructive approach and contribution of the Group of 77 and China. Let me seize the opportunity right here to register my deep personal gratitude to the Group in its entirety for the trust, confidence and support that made it possible for myself and my colleagues in the Chair's team to represent the Group and negotiate on its behalf. I should go on to add that the developing countries, who are the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, will continue their active and proactive engagement in the on-going multilateral process in this field with the very clear objective of safeguarding and further promoting our genuine, long-term collective interests. All our negotiating partners can be assured of our commitment and engagement.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude the statement on a note of special tribute to Michael Zammit Cutajar, for his invaluable service for a whole decade to the climate change process, the Convention, the Protocol and the Secretariat. I find myself short of words to do justice to such an excellent record of dedication, experience, discretion and selfless service. Let me thank him, on behalf of the whole Group, for all he has done and also for the fine legacy he leaves behind. Michael, let me wish you health, prosperity, success and good luck.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.