

Statement by Ambassador Bagher Asadi, Chairman of the Group of 77 (Islamic Republic of Iran), at the closing session of the COP-7, UNFCCC

Marrakech, 10 November 2001

Mr. President,
Distinguished Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This should indeed be a great moment for the international community, in its entirety; an occasion for collective resolve, an opportunity for the prevalence of global common concerns over interests of other nature – including even national interests, dear as they are to all of us on both sides of the development divide. Back in July, I termed the Bonn Agreements as the “triumph of multilateralism over unilateralism”. Today, we are witness to the reaffirmation of the same; the same resolve and the same spirit, even if taxed to the extreme during the past so many hours. The outcome, clinched as it appears at the very last moment, is reflective of the complexity of the issues involved and the intensity of negotiations. Now, it could be said, with a sense of certitude and satisfaction – even a sense of great relief – that realism, flexibility, and perhaps multilateral brinkmanship, all helped to save the day and the hard-won, embattled Kyoto Protocol. And this should be a cause for celebration; for us here and for everybody out there in the real world – our governments, private sector, civil society, NGOs, and not to forget the ever-vigilant media – that we did not succumb to our parochial interests. Nor will generations to come fault us for lack of vision.

Mr. President,

Speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, let me seize this rather unique moment – unique in every sense - to place on record our deep gratitude and appreciation to your excellent stewardship of this Conference and your able Moroccan colleagues and assistants. Your experience, wisdom, patience, and let me add, a seldom-fading smile, have played an important role in successfully shepherding this meeting. The remarkable work of Ministers Moussa and Roche on the outstanding issues and the preparation of a balanced package, and its further amendment after so many long hours of informal consultations, is to be commended. Equally commendable is the excellent job Minister Hodgeson performed on LULUCF. The final outcome, given all the parameters involved, is a good outcome. I have to agree with the French saying that “le meilleur est l’ennemi du bien”. The Climate Change Secretariat, Mr. Zammit Cutajar personally and his colleagues, have provided the best professional and substantive support one could have expected. Let me thank all of you.

Now, we are at the end of a long journey towards the ratification of the Protocol and the implementation of the Convention. We have agreed on everything that makes the objective of ratification and entry into force possible. A whole lot of sacrifice was made, including, in particular, by the developing world, to make this possible. Here and now begins a much longer – and I suppose, much harder – process for the international community. What is more important is to ensure faithful compliance by the parties to what they have agreed in Marrakech. The developing world, whose active engagement in and critical contribution to the process in general and negotiations in particular, in Bonn as well as in Marrakech, made the achievement of agreement possible is now looking to the future, with hope and anticipation. We are as determined in vigorously pursuing the implementation of what has been agreed here as we have been in forging them. We look forward to see the actual operationalization of the three Funds established in Bonn. Nice, positive words and promises of Bonn do indeed need to be followed up by concrete actions and measures as early as COP-8. Equally imperative is the implementation of our decisions on transfer of technology, capacity-building, economic diversification and adaptation.

Mr. President,

On the very first day of the COP-7 you heard the Chair of G-77 assert the commitment of the whole Group to help crown the Bonn achievement with yet another, higher level of multilateral agreement. And we promised to bring to the process, as we had in Bonn, dialogue, understanding, engagement, cooperation and disposition to consensus. We have delivered what we promised, both at the level of the Group itself as well as within the bigger intergovernmental body. First and foremost, I should thank each and every member of the Group, for their participation, engagement and support. Our distinguished coordinators have done a Herculean job all through the negotiations. And special words of thanks to Mr. Salamat, an old hand in the process for so many long years and Mr. Rezvanian, my two indefatigable colleagues, for a huge job well done.

The trust and confidence of the rank and file of the developing world in the Iranian Chairmanship all through the process has been indispensable to our work and what we have collectively accomplished, for which I remain ever grateful. And I am sure that all my fellow developing colleagues concur with me that this process, including the rather long suspenseful hours we have gone through since last night, reaffirmed, once again, the great virtue of unity and solidarity of the Group and the need for its further strengthening. These words of appreciation also go to all other negotiating partners, especially the European Union. What started in earnest in Bonn and bore fruit, continued further in Marrakech, ensuring similar outcome. I thank them all. The genuine cooperation that made Marrakech a success, shall continue henceforth and towards the implementation of the decisions we have adopted.

Mr. President,

I cannot conclude this statement at the end of COP-7 without paying special tribute to Michael Zammit Cutajar, for his invaluable service to the climate change process, the Convention, the Protocol and the Secretariat. Having listened to his very thoughtful “parting reflections”, expressed just two days ago, I really find myself short of words. I can hardly say anything that could come close to what resonates from those words of dedication, experience, discretion and selfless service. Let me thank him, on behalf of the whole Group, for all he has done and the fine legacy he leaves behind. Michael, let me wish you health, prosperity, success and good luck. Three cheers for you.

And on this I close my statement.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.