

AFRICA GROUP OF NATIONS POSITION STATEMENT¹

TO THE UN CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS, AUGUST 1997 AGBM

Mr. Chairman - Let me begin by adding the Africa Group support for the statement made by the Chairman of the Group of G-77 speaking on behalf of the G-77 and China. Speaking on behalf of the Africa Group, I wish to commend you on the manner in which you have presided over the negotiations in the AGBM process.

This has been an extremely difficult session of meetings. However, what is crucial is to try to evaluate whether or not the Parties have made any real headway in trying to strengthen the commitments under Article 4.2 (a) and (b) and advance the implementation of Article 4.1 as was mandated to us by the Berlin Mandate.

We shall pack our bags and return home with a sense of concern about the pace of progress that has been made. Unfavourable climatic conditions will continue to plague our economies, our crops will continue to fail, national external debts will remain a problem to us and our basic social infrastructure will continue to suffer as a result of the impacts of climate change.

Yet the Annex One Parties - in particular those parties that have chosen to refrain from giving us their numbers - will go home smiling, celebrating their success in holding back the negotiation process.

We are grateful to those Parties who have given us their proposals and we look forward to evaluating these proposals in order to assess the impacts they will have on our socio-economic infrastructures. Some of our countries are already in the process of implementing activities to address the problem of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) emissions. We wait in anticipation for Annex One countries to show the necessary commitment. As we negotiate the reduction of GHG, the countries of Africa believe that there should be certain principles that need to be clearly defined. 17

First: There must be limits on all GHGs if the danger to our climate is to be averted. The IPCC scientific assessment report provides us with the basis for global consensus on such limits. The contrary view therefore does not enjoy much emotional, political or indeed scientific support.

Second: A globally agreed ceiling of GHG emissions can only be achieved by adopting the principle of per capita emissions rights that fully take into account the reality of population growth and the principle of differentiation.

Third: Achievement of a safe limit to global GHG emissions can be achieved by reducing the emissions of Annex One while at the same time ensuring that there is controlled growth of future emissions from Non-Annex One countries, reflecting our legitimate right to sustainable economic growth.

¹ Springer Verlag Man Made Climate Change Economic Aspects and Policy Options Chapter 15.
See: - <<http://www.gci.org.uk/papers/zew.pdf>>Appendix C page 16

We strongly believe that this will take us along a path to responsible climate management that allows us to reach our goal of defining a mutually agreed point of convergence and sustainable development. Such a convergence Mr. Chairman must ensure that we maintain a global ceiling on emissions to prevent dangerous interference with the climate system.

Fourth: When we look at time frames, we believe that insufficient commitment by Annex One countries will only result in delaying our influence on the climate system. If this course is maintained, then we will all suffer and the burden will be even greater for humanity in general. The burden for any future mitigation efforts on those of who have not been historically and currently responsible for creating the problem will be greater.

Mr. Chairman we recognise that per capita emissions rights, as a form of differentiation is not an easy goal. It calls for deliberate actions to attain reduction targets over time by Annex One Parties and sustainable growth in the Non-Annex One Parties. To do this Africa would need predictable financial resources, technology transfer, education, training and public awareness, systematic observation and research. We look forward to renewed cooperation with other Parties in implementing our commitments under Article 4.1.

Mr. Chairman, we must focus our attention on the most appropriate, reasonable and acceptable time frame for action. There is an over-riding pre-requisite. The time frame can not be too far away into the future if we are to avoid at all costs the dangers that global climate change poses. The current scientific evidence indicates that Africa faces decline in water resources, agricultural production and economic performance. It is therefore for this reason that we wish to register the seriousness with which we view the effective implementation of the Convention and future agreements emanating from it.

Finally Mr. Chairman, we would request that the Secretariat take note of the views expressed in this statement on behalf of the African Group of Nations and Parties to the Convention. We look forward to meaningful targets and timeframes for consideration at the next session of the AGBM. –

I thank you. (Mrs. Karamanzira - Zimbabwe).