

YC / R v D

YOUTH DECLARATION

file: second
meeting of
C.P. Mont
Protocol

PRESENTED TO THE SECOND MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL ON SUBSTANCES THAT DEplete THE OZONE LAYER, LONDON, 27TH JUNE 1990, BY THE AUSTRALIAN YOUTH DELEGATION REPRESENTATIVE SUSANNAH BEGG (AGE 17).

We are speaking on behalf of the young people of Australia. We are here because we have a right to be involved in these decisions.

Over the past week of negotiations, we have been watching you. It has been at times fascinating, at times confusing, at times horrifying. We have had to keep reminding each other that what is actually being debated here is the future of the ozone layer. This debate has been largely guided by short sighted commercial gains and national self-interest. There has been more concern for semantics than substance. There has been more self-congratulation than self-examination. We are appalled that countries like Britain are claiming to have led the world in international environmental cooperation, when in reality they have been hindering moves for faster phase-out dates. If this debate is setting the precedent for tackling the global warming problem then we can have little hope of avoiding the greenhouse effect.

The scientific imperatives are clear. Only an immediate end to the use of ozone depleting chemicals will truly reflect the urgency of the situation. Even if we do this it will be a further sixty years before the Antarctic ozone hole is repaired. We came to the conference with this knowledge. but it seems you did not. Your diplomatic compromises are compromising our future.

We have a right to demand a safe future for ourselves and all generations to come. Shifting money and technology from one side of the globe to the other is not enough. What is required is a fundamental change in attitudes, values and lifestyles, particularly in the developed nations. We insist that over the next three days you make decisions which reflect intergenerational equity and an active concern for the environment. Remember that we will inherit the consequences of your decisions. We can not ammend the Montreal Protocol - you can. You will not bear the brunt of ozone depletion - we will.

We demand that you think in the long-term. Even the best proposals on the table now sanction an unacceptable increase in the chlorine loading of the stratosphere. Your rhetoric is not being matched by your action. Will you condemn us to a future fraught with skin cancer, eye cataracts, immune deficiency, depleted food sources and vanishing biodiversity?

At the moment we are afraid. Do not leave our generation without hope.

Our fate lies in your square brackets.

You are making history.

Have the courage to save the ozone layer.

Thankyou.