

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S SPEECH
AT
THE FOURTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE VIENNA
CONVENTION AND THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE
MONTREAL PROTOCOL, SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA,
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The President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This has been a remarkable few months for this continent - and this country. We have been fortunate to have the meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Buenos Aires just last week, a meeting on Joint Implementation for Climate Change here in Costa Rica just a few weeks ago and now once again the environmental centre of the world is this beautiful city of San José.

This great country of Costa Rica is a universe in itself, rich in the resources with which nature has endowed it and in the diversity, the vitality, the creativity and charm of its people. In a world, where power is still measured in terms of armaments, Costa Rica has been recognized as a "biological superpower".

The economic, social and environmental challenges that Costa Rica is tackling today mirror some of the issues that this Conference will be addressing.

I want to express to the President, Government and the people of Costa Rica our deep gratitude for the remarkable job in preparing for this meeting and for the warmth and generosity with which we have been welcomed here.

Perspective is difficult to apply to events of the day.

However, historians decades hence will surely conclude that in 1996 we stood on the threshold of a great transformation. The global system that was once viewed as a balance of power is now more of a web of highly interdependent states.

Perturbation in one part of the web undermines the viability of the whole. The forces propelling this change - technological, economic, ecological and demographic - belong less and less to sovereign national systems. Gathering strength at ever increasing rates and with rising impacts, they have changed the conditions for successful governance and they have created new imperatives for international cooperation.

Global environmental change is dominated by uncertainties. We do not know future carbon dioxide emissions. And even if we knew the concentrations, we still could not predict all of the physical climate changes they would cause. If we could accurately predict the climate changes, we would not necessarily know with accuracy the socioeconomic effects. If we could project adverse future socioeconomic effects, we still would have difficulty prescribing effective policy for all countries. Even if we were to formulate a policy, would this policy be acceptable to the future generations?

In a situation of uncertainty, the appropriate procedure is careful assessment and experimentation, followed by constant, truthful evaluation of results and willingness to change strategies.

Political leaders and decision makers often tend to seek neat, definitive, final answers to difficult questions. But uncertainty dictates that we constantly reassess, re-evaluate and reaffirm our chosen path, and that we learn from our mistakes.

The Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol stand as symbols of cooperative, adaptable action in the face of uncertainty.

From a decision-making point of view, the most interesting feature of the protocol is its dynamic character and its capacity to be altered by new information. Built into the structure of the protocol is ~~provision~~ ^{provision} of periodic assessments, examining the status of the understanding of atmospheric change. These assessments focus on recent scientific advances that relate to the adequacy of the protocol in achieving its goals. The farsightedness of the protocol also includes the realization that new insights will continue and that many will be relevant to updated policy decisions.

Mr. Chairman,

As we gather in San José today we have before us, two indications about the state of the ozone layer.

First, recent ozone measurements reveal that the danger to the ozone layer is far from over. Results of ozone concentrations obtained in September 1996, indicate that the destruction of ozone over the South Pole is similar in extent and depth to what had been observed there in the last few years. What we have achieved so far, while good, is not enough.

Secondly, recent ground-based measurements show that the accumulation rates of the major CFCs in the background atmosphere, are now decreasing, as would be expected from the phase-out of ODSs according to the Montreal Protocol and its Amendments and Adjustments. The concentration of methyl chloroform is even beginning to fall. The abundance of some HCFCs, however, is increasing fast.

It is clear that we must sustain and reaffirm our commitment to preserve the ozone layer.

In this regard, I commend the work done by the Scientific, the Environmental Effects, and Technology and Economic Assessment Panels and the Technical Options Committee, as well as the important role played by the Scientific Assessment Panel of the WMO with substantial contributions by the national agencies.

Certainly, science has and will continue to figure prominently in our efforts to ensure the preservation of our ozone layer. The scientist's chair is now firmly drawn up to the negotiating table right next to that of the politician, the corporate manager, the lawyer and the economist. But to keep our place at the table, attention must continue to be paid to monitoring, archiving of measurements and cooperation with WMO - particularly investigating the interaction between the science of ozone and Climate Change.

Financial support is essential. I urge Parties to look creatively at sources of funding, including the GEF to provide assistance in this research.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Although 162 countries have ratified the Vienna Convention, and 160 countries have ratified the Montreal Protocol, relatively fewer countries have ratified the Amendments to the Montreal Protocol. 111 countries have ratified the London Amendment and only 63 countries have ratified the Copenhagen Amendment of 1992.

I once again call upon those countries which have not ratified the Convention and the Protocol and its amendments to do so the earliest. It is particularly important for the Countries with their Economies In Transition to ratify the London Amendment, since the GEF has linked the provision of its financial support to those countries to their ratification of the London Amendment.

I would also like to draw your attention to the status of the Montreal Protocol and the Vienna Convention Trust Funds. You will be reviewing and approving the annual budget of the Trust Funds of the Montreal Protocol and the Vienna Convention during this meeting.

I urge all Parties to pay their dues promptly. The purpose of these trust funds is to enable the Meetings of the Parties, their Committees, Working Groups and Assessment Panels to take place with the necessary services provided by the Ozone Secretariat for adequate operation of the Vienna Convention and Montreal Protocol.

But, I must point out with some regret that unpaid contributions for 1995 and earlier to the Vienna Convention and to the Montreal Protocol amount to US \$283,000 and US \$2,132,000 respectively. Unpaid contributions for 1996 are US\$536,000 and US\$4,357,000 respectively.

To enable the essential work to continue with as wide participation as possible, we have appealed to the Parties to assist participants from developing countries and Eastern European countries to attend our meetings. I am grateful to Denmark, the European Union, Germany and Norway for responding generously to our appeal.

The Parties decided at the Fifth Meeting of the Parties at Bangkok that the Multilateral Fund for the time period 1994-1996 will be sustained at the level of US\$510 million with the understanding that US \$55 million of that sum would be provided by funds unallocated during 1991-1993 period, or US\$151.7 million per year.

I am pleased to report that the Fund has collected US \$536 million so far. But there are arrears up to the end of 1995 of 64 million dollars. For 1996, however, many Parties still owe about 90 million dollars.

I request the Parties to pay their arrears and outstanding contributions quickly. These funds are being disbursed to projects and activities which lead to ODSs phase-out and any delay in payment will have adverse consequences.

Mr. Chairman,

The Multilateral Fund needs replenishment for the period 1997-1999. The decision of the Parties on the amount by which the Multilateral Fund needs to be replenished is one of the most important decisions to be made here at San José. At their Seventh Meeting last year in Vienna, Parties requested the Technology and Economic Assessment Panel (TEAP), to examine and report on the requirements of the Multilateral Fund for 1997 - 1999. Allow me to pay a special tribute to Dr. Kuijpers, one of the Co-chairs, who chaired the group which prepared the report and to other members for their excellent work. The Open-Ended Working Group has considered the report, and the reports resulting from further requests by Parties. And yet I understand that it has not yet been possible to reach agreement on this important issue.

The task now is before the Parties, I would urge all of you to remember your primary goal of protecting the ozone layer, when you negotiate on the replenishment issue. So far the industrialized countries have done very well by contributing to the Fund as needed and by their efforts to transfer alternative technologies. The developing countries have responded well and taken up in earnest the work of phase-out much earlier than required by the Protocol.

I am heartened to learn from the Chairman of the Executive Committee that the Multilateral Fund has committed more than US\$ 530 million for the phase-out of over 75,000 tonnes of ODS (or more than 30% of the consumption of Article 5 countries). The excellent work of the Executive Committee should be commended.

I would particularly like to quote the extraordinary success story of Thailand. By 1st January 1997, Thailand's refrigerator manufacturers will cease production of CFC-based refrigerators. By that date the Government will also ban the imports of CFC-based refrigerators.

This signal achievement has been made possible by the cooperation of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry of Japan, the EPA of USA, the Japan Electrical Manufacturers Association and Japan Industrial Conference for Ozone Layer. But most of the credit should go to the Department of Industrial Works of Thailand.

This is wonderful cooperation within the framework of the Montreal Protocol. I urge both the developed and developing countries to emulate this example. Colombia, Egypt, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Costa Rica are among others that should be mentioned because of their significant efforts. We should not be complacent and take comfort in approving projects. This will not protect the ozone layer. Only implementation will.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Accurate and timely reporting of data and information under the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol is essential if Parties are to monitor progress and have a firm basis for decision making.

I am gratified on the substantial improvement in the reporting of data on ODSs on baselines, annual consumption, exports and imports by the Parties for 1994 and 1995. 104 Parties out of 141 have reported on the required data.

The data received indicates that only a few countries do not comply with consumption requirements demanded by the Montreal Protocol. These countries have indicated that they will be unable to comply with the control measures. They have asked for time up to the year 2000 and have also requested assistance.

The Implementation Committee has reviewed their cases individually and recommended appropriate assistance. The GEF has so far sanctioned about US \$110 million to assist 9 countries.

Mr. Chairman,

I now turn to one of perhaps the most urgent issues that the Parties will face in the coming years: Illegal Trade and Enforcement.

I must emphasize that illegal trade in ODSs and lack of enforcement would lead to an increase of their consumption and to the nullification of the entire global endeavour to phase out the ODS quantities in recent years. Parties must take urgent steps to curb the illegal trade. I welcome the draft decision that is before the Parties as a significant step that will complement decisions taken by the Parties at their Seventh Meeting.

Distinguished Delegates,

You have also to decide on changes in the Terms of Reference of the TEAP, the most important technological advisory body. These proposed changes result from a timely review of the TEAP and its subsidiary bodies, and, if adopted, will provide a sound basis for TEAP's future work. While regular review is healthy, I suggest that TEAP now needs a period of stability for several years to accommodate the changes. I urge all Parties to support the TEAP in its work which is so essential for the Protocol.

The challenges we still face in implementing the Montreal Protocol are formidable. Perhaps the greatest threat is to let ourselves be sidelined from our key objective by relatively insignificant issues.

At this meeting, it is not surprising that we're focussing on replenishment, but we cannot afford to lose sight of the protection of the ozone layer. We cannot afford to ignore emerging scientific evidence of health impacts or of the results of investigations into illegal trade while we debate and fine tune the terms of reference of our Committees or seek perfection in solutions.

The challenges we still face in implementing the Montreal Protocol are formidable. As we move on to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Montreal Protocol, let us realize that we are faced with two challenges: to promote effective implementation of existing targets and at the same time negotiate new ones.

As we approach this anniversary, I suggest it is timely that Parties look carefully at how they are implementing the Protocol. Are we keeping protection of the ozone layer as our objective? Are we heeding the advice of our scientific advisers in our decisions? Are the issues being promoted truly the priority for global action? Or are we allowing national or lesser priorities determine our actions?

By forging the Montreal Protocol we set an important precedent before the world. Now the time has come to implement its mechanisms in the spirit in which they were fashioned.

I wish you all success in your deliberations.
