



# Speech

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Speech 1990/17

STATEMENT BY  
MOSTAFA K. TOLBA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNEP  
TO THE OPENING CEREMONY  
OF THE  
SECOND MEETING OF THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL  
LONDON, 27TH JUNE 1990

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Mr. Chairman, Madam Prime Minister, my dear colleagues, the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organisation and the Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organisation, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me begin by joining in thanking you, Madam Prime Minister, Her Majesty's Government and the people of the UK and the City of London for hosting this critically important conference. I wish to thank you very much, Mr. President for your kind words. I am extremely grateful for the kind words you extended to me personally and to my colleagues in UNEP. I also wish to extend our deep appreciation to my dear colleague Mr. William O'Neil, Secretary General of IMO, for the tremendous contribution you and your staff are making to the efficient running of this conference and I thank you for your kind words. I also wish to welcome my dear colleague Professor Obasi, Secretary General of WMO with whom I am working so closely on this issue of ozone and on the even more difficult issue of climate change.

Mr. President - Yes - Madam Prime Minister, it is just fifteen months since we met here in London for "Saving the Ozone Conference". True - we have travelled far since then. The science has become much harder. Good intentions have been put into practice. Our aspirations are being met. And no more so than over the past 9 days when government representatives worked around the clock to lay the groundwork for a successful conclusion to this meeting. In an always positive spirit, they have dealt with the detail without ever losing sight of the task at hand which is to protect and heal our damaged ozone layer.

True also, difficulties still remain to be dealt with by the ministers in the next three days. But I think we are all agreed that far too much is at stake to even contemplate failure. Here, in London, we have no option but to succeed and we will - Incha Allah - God willing - succeed.

With a successful outcome to this meeting we will become more confident in tackling the much more complex environmental issues that now loom: climate change, loss of bio-diversity, genetic engineering, new materials and so on.

In London we are setting the tone. We are establishing a new political movement to deal with the environmental crisis, a movement not based on short-term but on long-term benefit for all; a movement that is rooted in respect for the value of human life and in respect for nature. In fact, we are not only writing a much stronger treaty but a new chapter in international relations.

Madam Prime Minister

The ozone layer has truly found a champion. The London Ozone Conference, convened in March last year at your personal initiative, blew a gust of wind into our sails. Since then the number of countries ratifying the Protocol as you said has jumped from 34 to 60 - a three fourths increase in membership. Others will join soon.

By inviting President Moi of Kenya to make the keynote speech to the March conference, you signalled the UK Government's concern for the predicament of developing nations, by inviting ministers and leading industrialists you showed your concern for political and financial reality.

In short, Madam Prime Minister, you demonstrated in the most emphatic way possible, that catastrophe does not need to happen before governments are spurred into action. And that scientific uncertainty is no excuse for delay.

More than that, you have demonstrated environmental statesmanship outside the ozone issue. Your warnings on global warming have received world attention as did your commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions at home. It did not escape our notice in UNEP that your address to the last session of the UN General Assembly was devoted exclusively to the global environmental crisis. Nor did your forceful political position and financial commitment today escape, I believe, the notice of anyone in this hall.

As a former member of the cabinet of my country, I know of the constraints on political action. There will always be those who will complain you and we are not going far or fast enough. I believe, Madam Prime Minister, that as a scientist by training, it is the scientific evidence of the grave nature of the global environmental crisis that is guiding your policies and I hope will be guiding the policies of all of us.

Your call for a 'giant international effort' to save the environment has been heard the world over. And by committing your government to finance the Ozone Fund, by helping to finance schemes ranging from checking the desert in Kenya, to protecting the rainforest in Brazil, your government is helping to combat the alarming destruction of the components of the environment, the foundations of the global economy. And in so doing, you are making common cause with the people of your country and of people everywhere. You are acting Madam Prime Minister from a strong belief that protecting the environment transcends the rough and tumble of party politics and of narrow sovereign concerns. When it comes to saving the global environment, we are all in this together.

**Madam Prime Minister**

The greatest barrier to action is the notion that protecting the environment is not a job for “us” but a job for “them”, the authorities, the people in government. UNEP established the Global 500 Roll of Honour to demonstrate that there can be no “us” and “them”. We have honoured people from every conceivable walk of life who have made a significant contribution to protecting the environment - they include a monk, a rubber tapper, a President. Today, it is my special honour to add a Prime Minister to that Roll of Honour - you Madam Prime Minister, for in helping to put the environment at the top of the international agenda, you have indeed helped to bring down the barrier between “them” and “us” at a world level. And by so doing have helped provide an example to many throughout the world. It is my pleasure to invite you, Madam Prime Minister, to receive the award.



# Speech

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2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Parties  
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- documents*

Speech 1990/18

**STATEMENT BY  
MOSTAFA K. TOLBA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNEP  
TO SECOND MEETING OF THE CONTRACTING PARTIES  
OF THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL  
LONDON, 27TH - 29TH JUNE 1990**

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**PUTTING THE MEANING INTO MEANINGFUL**

Mr. President, My Dear friend and colleague Professor Obasi, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me start, Mr. President, by congratulating you on the confidence you received from the governments of the world to run this meeting of the Parties. It is a hard and sensitive responsibility. But knowing you, I have no doubt you will discharge it brilliantly.

Mr. President,

Hundreds of millions of people around the world are awaiting the outcome of this meeting. Hundreds of representatives of the world's television, radio and newspapers are here in London to tell them.

The last decade of this century must be the 'turn-around' decade for the environment.

We start now. The time of high sounding declarations which promise everything and achieve next to nothing is over. The time of international conferences at which - when all is said and done - more is said than done is over.

Sixty Contracting Parties to the Montreal Protocol and scores of those who will soon become Parties are here, not only to save the protective ozone layer, but to demonstrate to a world public that a new era of international action is at hand. Your collective task is truly an historic one.

The Montreal Protocol agreed by 81 States in 1987 was the first to decide for itself a date of entry into force. The progress since 1st January last year has - by any yardstick you care to choose - been remarkable. We have an agreement which has proven itself equal to advance in our scientific understanding. What seemed insurmountable just a few years ago will, I am confident, be surmounted at this meeting.

The industrial, scientific, and government communities all now accept that the initial target of freezing CFC production and halving output will not save the ozone layer.

A 3% depletion in the stratospheric ozone layer has already taken place. Latest observations by Australia and the Scandinavian countries have revealed an ever-deepening seasonal hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica and significant losses over Northern latitudes. And we know that even if we

stopped production this very minute of all ozone-depleting chemicals, it would take 80 years to plug the ozone hole over Antarctica and to heal the ozone layer chlorine concentrations are reduced to pre-industrial levels.

Further, science tells us that CFCs are major contributors to the greenhouse effect, responsible in the 1980s for around a fifth of the build-up of heat insulating gases. Our task here in London is to align what is politically possible with what science demands. Last year the London and Helsinki meetings showed that the world is prepared to synchronise action. And we gather here today with a clear understanding of what the essential elements must be for a more rigorous Protocol.

I believe you would all join me in paying a special tribute to the members of the Bureau that just concluded its mandate and particularly our outgoing President, Minister Kaj Barlund for their effort over the past 12 months. I believe also we would all want to extend deep gratitude to members of the Working Group and their three Chairmen, Ambassador Ristimaki of Finland, Ambassador Mateus of Mexico and Mr. Victor Buxton of Canada. In the brief span of nine months, the Bureau has met four times and the Working Group on no less than eight occasions. Together, and with the dedicated and tireless support of a very small number of my colleagues in the Secretariat, they have hammered out the essentials of the agreement now before Contracting Parties; an agreement which will demonstrate to the peoples of the world that their governments are prepared to take meaningful action.

Let me stay with that word "meaningful". A word which in the international context has so often signified the exact opposite.

Let me outline what UNEP considers to be "meaningful" with regard to the provisions of a strengthened Protocol:

**First:** The phasing out and termination by the Year 2000, before preferably of the controlled five CFCs and three halons, and all other fully halogenated CFCs.

**second:** Elimination of the use of carbon tetrachloride, and a very considerable reduction in the use of methyl chloroform, again by the end of the century.

and **third:** Inclusion of all substitutes to the controlled substances on separate lists with a requirement for annual reports on their production and consumption. There should be strict guidelines for their usage and a commitment to phase out substitutes within a specific period of time and a clear signal to industry that what we need are not only safe substitutes but also substitutes with no ozone depleting potential and with no global warming potential.

Since the 60 contracting parties are currently responsible for more than 90% of the production and consumption of the ozone layer depleting chemicals, inclusion of these three elements will provide the basis of a meaningful Protocol.

But the hallmark of this Protocol is that it is forward-looking. 100 UN member states have still to ratify. Among them are the newly industrialising nations, two in particular, India and China, represent over one third of mankind.

The stark reality is that in the developing nations ozone layer depletion is not a priority environmental concern among the public. Other concerns are far ahead of it on the list: poverty, lack of shelter, education, medical treatment - even clean water itself. And the public in both north and south is not yet geared to do their job - to change their habits and attitudes to help save the ozone layer.

Much needs to be done, by you the governments and by several others if we are to save the globe and to save ourselves. I am talking of a concerted, across-the-board effort by NGOs, by industry, by citizen associations and by the media.

And the industrial giants of tomorrow must be given incentives to leapfrog the CFCs and other dangerous chemicals in their development. It is a source of the most profound encouragement to UNEP that we meet here in London with contracting parties now indicating their readiness to provide those incentives. I refer to a financial mechanism and to technology transfer.

There will be no "meaningful" protocol unless there is full agreement on providing these incentives. What we must agree upon is the establishment of a financial mechanism including a properly financed multilateral fund. One designed specifically to meet the incremental costs imposed on developing nations when complying with the provisions of a current and strengthened protocol. I am sure the target funding and the terms of reference for applying the contributions agreed by the working group meetings have provided contracting parties with such a design. What remains is the last step. It is your responsibility to cover it. It may be difficult - but it must be covered.

Also before you is the proposal regarding the transfer of technology, the product of the fullest possible consultation between governments. I have had the pleasure of attending all the consultative meetings and can testify to the tremendous willingness, especially evident in the intensive negotiations of the previous two months, and more so of the last few days, of all sides to strike an agreement that will work.

Contracting Parties have before them therefore the essential constituents of what UNEP considers to be a meaningful agreement. Prime Minister Thatcher's announcement that the UK Government



will contribute 10 million pounds to be raised to 15 has given this Ministerial meeting the best possible start. The gauntlet has been thrown down. The judgement of the world's public and generations yet to be born will be harsh indeed for any country that does not take it up. I say this with the passion and conviction I can muster because far more is at stake than saving the ozone layer. The measures we agree here will show that the world can cope with climate change and the onslaught on biological resources. A successful outcome will demonstrate to a sceptical public worldwide that the nations of the industrialised north are serious about tackling the inequity in the global economy which is the underlying reason why our human environment is being destroyed. I would add too that a successful outcome will be a demonstration of the faith of nations in the UN.

Mr. President UNEP is now closely involved in creating the conditions for a meaningful outcome to the mid-1992 Conference on Environment and Development. With a successful outcome of this conference - we can all hope to go to Brazil with conventions on climate and bio-diversity ready for agreement.

Any setback here in London would amount to a setback for a whole movement to save the environment. A setback from which the world will never recover. I am sure we all bear this in mind as we get down to the task at hand.

Thank you.