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SPECIAL ISSUE

STATEMENT BY
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UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
TO THE THIRD MEETING
OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE
MONTREAL PROTOCOL

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Mr. President - Ladies and Gentlemen.

I wish to welcome all delegates who came from various capitals to attend this Third Meeting of the Parties of the Montreal Protocol to our host city and to our Headquarters.

And I would like to express deep gratitude to the outgoing Bureau. Special words of gratitude go to my dear friends the Presidents of the Second meeting of the Parties, Minister Chris Patten and Minister David Trippier. Their efforts at the London meeting left a lasting mark on international relations, and their work since then has been exemplary. The dedication and strenuous efforts of the whole Bureau since then have achieved much in the past year. I would like, also, to offer my congratulations to you Minister K'Ombudu on your election as President of this Session of the Parties and to all your colleagues on the new Bureau. Your task has been made somewhat easier through the work already put in by the two previous Bureaus. But the difficulties you face are expanding, as stratospheric ozone depletion accelerates. I wish you good fortune in your work and I am sure you will carry the flag in the battle to save the protective ozone layer with the same efficiency and dedication.

Mr. President,

The countries that have joined the Protocol since the London meeting take the total of Contracting Parties to 71. Thirteen of these new Parties are developing nations. The interim multilateral fund was established by UNEP and became operational on 1 January 1991 as decided by the Parties. The Chief Officer of the Fund Dr. El Arini assumed his functions in February. The Executive Committee met four times in less than nine months. Amb. Ristimaki and Amb. Mateus, Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee and each and everyone of its members gave a shining example of how governments can really co-operate and work in harmony. Their work is a major item on your agenda and you will see for yourselves how much they did to build a very solid foundation for a financial mechanism that is unprecedented. As implementing agencies UNDP, the World Bank and UNEP have agreed co-ordinated programmes which were screened by the Executive Committee over the last two days. The new co-ordinator of the ozone secretariat, Mr. Sarma, is with us on the podium. I have great pleasure in introducing him to you as Executive Secretary of the meeting. Dr. Rummel-Bulska the Chief of the ELIU is soon going to move to Geneva to coordinate the Interim Secretariat of the Basel Convention. She has done an outstanding job almost single-handedly, to make the Montreal Protocol a reality. I wish

to take this opportunity to thank her and express the hope that she will achieve a similar success with the Basel Convention.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Statesmanship of a very high order has created the conditions for the successful implementation of the Protocol. And I am sure you have come to this meeting with that quality to the fore. We are in sore need of it. Ozone depletion looms larger with each new piece of scientific information.

Recent analysis of data by NASA and from WMO has established that depletion of the ozone layer is accelerating, at a higher level than the predicted rate. Last year's Antarctic ozone hole equalled the worst on record in terms of ozone destruction. It also lasted for a worryingly long time, not breaking up till the end of December.

The ozone layer above the Arctic is also under attack, with depletion much worse than predicted.

Ozone depletion is no longer a phenomenon observed above sparsely-populated polar regions. It is now being recorded over most of the planet.

And science clearly warns that even with an immediate phaseout of all CFCs and related compounds, the world is committed to worsening ozone destruction well into the next century.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When you met last year, the knowledge of worsening ozone depletion spurred you to revise and strengthen the Montreal Protocol. To enter into force, the amendment to the Protocol must be ratified by at least 20 contracting parties. Yet officially only two nations had ratified. During the Preparatory Meeting last week, the USSR announced that it has ratified the amendment to the Protocol. And I know that Sweden ratified on the 4th of June. Several other governments are in the process of ratification. I also know that China acceded to the Protocol as amended in London. This is certainly a most welcome news. It is a major achievement that resulted from the historical translation of interdependence and partnership from slogans into realities that you, as Contracting Parties, have achieved in London. This ratification by China has financial implications. The level of the Multilateral Fund has to be adjusted to US\$ 200 million for the years 1991-93 according to what was agreed upon in London. You have to decide on this action during this meeting. I already raised the issue with the Executive Committee for the

Multilateral Fund. My understanding is that China is ready to move with the implementation of the Protocol. They now need technical and financial support to do so.

Mr. President,

All this is encouraging but we are still far from what you wanted in London. You wanted to see the London amendment enter into force by the 1st of January 1992. So I join Minister David Trippier in pleading with governments to put pressure on legislatures to speed up the process of ratification. You decided before to have the Protocol enter into force on 1 January 1989. You made it. And I am sure you will make it for the London amendment.

Mr. President,

The situation of developing countries, and their need for financial support to participate meaningfully in this global effort, should remain in the front of your minds during the next couple of days. The resources which have been pledged in London are not arriving on time. We are halfway through the 1st year of the Fund and we have received \$12.7 million. Developing countries need to be assured of the proper flow of resources to embark on the difficult but essential path of implementation of the provisions of the Montreal Protocol. I am aware that there are legislative requirements in a number of industrialised countries before they can pay. These have to be aired and considered this week.

There is also the question of the availability of technologies. Minister Trippier addressed this issue. What I wish to add is that regardless of how much money is devoted to transfer of technologies, it can buy nothing if the technologies are not made available. Some of these technologies exist now; others will come on stream within a few years. Industry expects to be compensated fairly for the encouraging strides it has made in developing replacement chemicals and technologies. And we need to encourage industry to do more, faster. This issue was hard in London. Any further developments in this area need to be considered during this meeting. And in this particular area the difficulties that are facing a country like the Republic of Korea which developed its own CFCs with its own resources - human and financial - need to be addressed. If we want every country to become a party - which is a must - they should be assisted to find solutions to the problems preventing them from becoming parties, especially the economic and social ones.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The work of governments, of industry and, of science have combined to give us real hope that we can stop the present destruction of our protective ozone layer. And this is not limited only to industrialized countries. Some developing countries are in the centre of the field. One example is Mexico. Mexican businessmen had no desire to remain ten years behind their trading partners in developing replacement technologies. Mexico is now phasing out CFC aerosols faster than some developed nations, and has halved its use of these chemicals in foam manufacture. There are many other heartening examples. Concern about ozone destruction is not limited merely to words.

Mr. President,

Another issue that you need to consider during this meeting is monitoring of compliance with the Protocol. You will have read the report of the Group of Experts on Reporting of Data, which outlines the difficulties and makes suggestions. You will need to decide on these recommendations.

In the same vein, the London meeting adopted, on an interim basis, procedures and institutional mechanisms for dealing with non-compliance. An Implementation Committee was established and met. The Legal Experts on Non-Compliance met in April this year. They still need time to finalize their study. Guidance from this meeting would be extremely helpful in reaching that goal.

Other important issues that need your consideration include responsibility of an Article 5 country when it exceeds 0.3 kgm/capita consumption annually, the application by one country from the West European and others group to be considered as a developing country for the purposes of the Protocol, and a number of trade issues. Most of these issues have been considered by your experts last week. I am sure their report, which has been considered this morning by your Bureau will assist you so much in taking your decisions.

Mr. President,

We have already made extraordinary progress under the Montreal Protocol. In large measure, this is due to public opinion and to the spirit of real partnership established between the Parties, and to the work of the Scientific, Environmental, Technical and Economic Panels. The first assessment by these Panels detailed ozone depletion, its causes, effects and practical solutions. The second assessment is now under way. The second report from the assessment panels will be completed before the end of 1991. If the findings show that the Protocol as revised in London is not strong enough to adequately protect the ozone layer the assessment panels will make

appropriate recommendations to the Parties. Some of the other issues I mentioned earlier and discussed by your experts during the preparatory meeting seem to suggest the need for amendment to the Protocol.

Under the provisions of the Vienna Convention, six months' notice is required if such adjustments or amendment are to be considered by the meeting of the Parties. I therefore suggest that the Parties give a mandate to the Open-ended Working Group of the Parties to consider early next year if any adjustments or amendment are needed on the basis of the assessment report and this meeting decisions. If that proves to be the case the Parties will need the six months required by the treaty, to review them. Under such condition I believe it would be prudent for the Parties to have their fourth meeting sometime in September or October of next year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nobody ever believed that protecting and ultimately restoring the ozone layer would be easy. Nobody disputes that there are still many difficult issues to be decided. But the spirit of international cooperation has already been forged. Your actions on behalf of the ozone layer have set many precedents. Your achievements offer great hope that the human race can ultimately restore the planet that they damaged and wounded. We caused the damage, we inflicted the wound, and we can and should correct the damage and heal the wound. Thank you.