Palestine

Madame President

At the outset I wish to extend to the Government and people of Mexico our appreciation for your hospitability and for hosting this important event, which addresses an issue of central importance, indeed survival, to all of us. Our admiration also goes to you, Madam President, for the creative manner in which you ran the work of Cancun climate conference.

Palestine associates itself with the statement delivered by His Excellency the Minister of Environment of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Madame President

Collective action is key to our success as without it, we are simply cannot confront the scientifically proven threat to our very existence. It is also indisputable that developing countries are the most affected by the dangerous effects of climate change since they are the least able to deal with them. Evasion of responsibility is simply not an option since we all face the negative impacts of climate change. That is why we must be guided by a spirit that reinforces global partnership and ensures results through actions.

Urgent action is our only way to mitigate the damage that has already been done to our environment. This action must guarantee that developing countries are not denied their right to sustainable development through economic, social development and environmental protection.

We believe our efforts to face the global challenge of climate change should depend on already existing instruments. Chiefly, the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol (the work that has been achieved thus far in Bali understandings and Tianzeft conference) as well as the Rio principles on environment and development are essential pillars that can guide our future efforts.

Palestine has taken major steps to combat climate change. We have tried to uphold our share of the collective responsibility to combat climate change despite our situation as a people still shackled by foreign military occupation.

Despite the difficulties posed by occupation, the Palestinian Authority has incorporated Environmental considerations into its State Building Plan "Ending the Occupation and Building the State". The Palestinian Authority has also developed a ten-year environmental strategy document to be updated every three to five years, for 2000–2010. This strategy identifies and analyzes the causes of current environmental problems, defines targets and proposes prioritized measures required to meet these targets. A National Committee for Climate Change has also been established, reflecting the importance of climate change and placing it high on the National Agenda, under the supervision and monitoring of the Environmental Quality Authority.

The Palestinian Environmental Law, approved on 28 December 1999, establishes the general legal framework for environmental protection in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Law covers a wide range of environmental protection and management issues. It also encourages sustainable resource development for the benefit of future generations on the basis of intergenerational equity.

The Palestinian Authority has recently developed a National Strategy for Adaptation and conducting Climate Change Awareness Campaign. We are also preparing a National Adaptation Program of Action, Initial Communication Report and Climate Change National Capacity Assessment in addition to implementing some pilot projects in the field of adaptation.

As an observer in the United Nations General Assembly, Palestine has actively participated in multilateral environmental agreements conferences and meetings.
Palestine also participates in regional arrangements concerning the environment within the Arab League and Euro-Mediterranean partnership. Palestine also continues to cooperate closely with the United Nations, and its organs and agencies, on the implementation of various environment-related activities.

But unfortunately, Palestine continues to be denied access to the UNFCCC, its protocols and to the multilateral funds established under them. We look forward to member states finding the political will to include Palestine in these bodies and the Climate Funds established under them in order to allow us to play our role in confronting the effects of climate change.

Madam President,

Despite all its well intentioned efforts, Palestine continues to face challenges that make environmental management a very hard task. At the heart of this lies the continued Israeli occupation that fragments the Palestinian land, controls and exploits natural resources including land and water, destroys vital infrastructure including water as well as razes lands and uproots of tree, degrading vegetation cover, biodiversity and landscape - to establish illegal settlements, separation wall and bypass roads.

Finally Madam President, allow me to remind (Conference) that through the practices and policies I have just outlined, the Occupying Power violates all norms and protocols aimed at combating climate change. Hence, collective responsibility requires that we do not shy away from addressing the special environmental needs of peoples living under occupation. Occupied peoples, like the rest of the people of the world, have a right to sustainable development and environmental protection and those rights should not be neglected or ignored. In our march to lay down the foundations of independent Palestine, we call upon you to lend us a hand in making this heartfelt and successful effort a comprehensive reality; one that offers our children the promise of freedom and a safe (and de) environment…

Thank you Madam President.