

I. OPENING OF THE SESSION

(Agenda item 1)

1. The eighth session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) was held at the Hotel Maritim, Bonn, from 2 to 12 June 1998.
2. The Chairman of the SBSTA, Mr. Kok Kee Chow (Malaysia), opened the session on 2 June 1998. He welcomed all delegates and observers and wished the participants a successful session. The Chairman noted that this was the first session of the SBSTA since the Conference of the Parties (COP), at its third session, had adopted the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Chairman remarked that all delegates should feel pride in that achievement and expressed the hope that the momentum of work thus generated would be maintained. Observing that this was the only occasion on which the SBSTA would meet before the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 4), the Chairman urged all Parties to seek common ground and prepare recommendations for decisions to be adopted at COP 4. The extended meeting time available to the SBSTA at this session should facilitate such progress. He concluded by encouraging Parties to make the best use of the time available to them.
3. At the 1st meeting, on 2 June, the Executive Secretary also welcomed all participants to the session. He noted that, whilst certain items on the SBSTA provisional agenda could be dealt with quickly, others, such as items 6 (b) and 8, would probably require more time. In this context, the Executive Secretary emphasized the need for flexibility so as to allow the necessary sequencing and coordination between the two subsidiary bodies in the consideration of agenda items.
4. At the 2nd meeting, which was held jointly with the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) on 2 June, statements were made by Her Excellency María Julia Alsogaray, Secretary of Natural Resources and Sustainable Development, Argentina, Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Executive Secretary.
5. Her Excellency María Julia Alsogaray emphasized the need for COP 4 to maintain the "spirit of Kyoto" and to make progress in rendering the Kyoto Protocol operational. Minister Alsogaray emphasized that the government of Argentina would, as host government of COP 4, be doing its utmost to promote such progress. As an example of an area where particular progress might be made, she identified broad interest in the early functioning of the clean development mechanism, as well as in emissions trading. She noted that accounting and verification underlie both these issues and that developing procedures and mechanisms for compliance will also become critical. In closing, Minister Alsogaray called upon all Parties to help identify achievable priorities to enable COP 4 to advance the work begun at Kyoto.
6. Mr. Klaus Töpfer reminded delegates that 5 June was World Environment Day. The occasion was a reminder of the need to decouple economic growth from environmental pollution.