

Thank you Mr Chairman.

It is a great honour for me, as representative of Spain, to take the floor today on behalf of the European Union. First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr Estrada, for your election as Chairman of this Group and to thank through you the Secretariat for the prompt organization of the first meeting of the Berlin Mandate Group.

Berlin has led to a balanced compromise on the steps to be taken in relation to the period after the year 2000. The text of the Berlin Mandate which was accepted by all participants must be the starting point of our future work. The European Union is confident that all negotiators will keep the spirit of the Berlin meeting and work cooperatively in order to make as much progress as possible at this session of the Ad hoc Group.

Our task is clear: we do have to negotiate a protocol or another legal instrument, including the strengthening of the commitments of the Parties included in Annex I to the Convention in Article 4, paragraphs 2(a) and (b), as early as possible in 1997 with a view to adopting the results at COP3.

The European Union sees the work of this Group as concentrating on three elements, as set out in paragraphs 2(a) and (b) of the Berlin Mandate. These three elements are:

- elaboration of policies and measures for Annex I parties;
- setting of quantified limitation and reduction objectives within specified time-frames for Annex I Parties;
- reaffirmation and continued advancement of the implementation of existing commitments of non-Annex I Parties

taking into account the further provisions in paragraphs 2(c) to (f) and 3 to 5 of the Mandate.

The European Union recognizes the importance of the work of this Group. The suggested programme of work offers the important elements for the process until COP2 as well as until COP3.