

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, AMBASSADOR RAÚL ESTRADA-OYUELA  
CHAIRMAN OF THE AD HOC GROUP ON THE BERLIN MANDATE (AGBM)  
AT THE OPENING PLENARY SESSION**

**10. 00 a.m. on 31 July 1997 at the MARITIM Hotel, BONN**

*Good morning, Distinguished Delegates,*

I call to order the first meeting of the seventh session of the Ad Hoc Group on the Berlin Mandate (AGBM) and I welcome all of those who have had the courtesy to come to this meeting in Bonn this morning.

As we approach the meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to be held in Kyoto, in December, despite the doubts, difficulties and problems which we shall have to resolve these few weeks ahead, I remain optimistic as to the results we shall achieve. I invite all of you to resume our tasks by sharing this optimism, although I am not naive and I am well aware of the risks we face.

The meeting of the Heads of State and Governments of the Group of 7 and the Russian Federation at Denver and the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, demonstrated interest in climate change problems which was not always evident at earlier meetings. We did not have such indications of interest at these levels when we begun our Sixth session here last March.

As we all know, our negotiations are taking place in the context of the Berlin Mandate and we have to adapt to that Mandate. We have heard voices which in one way or another criticised the scope of that Mandate. It is possible that it is not perfect, but it is the result of arduous negotiations, the final strand of which took place at Ministerial level, and it was adopted by the Conference of the Parties. We are not competent to modify it, nor should we distort its sense. We are called upon to comply with the Mandate rather than to reform it.

For those who seek to introduce innovations or additions outside the framework of the Mandate, it is worthwhile recalling the possibilities for progress in achieving the Convention's objective are not exhausted in this Ad Hoc Group. The Convention established a process which opens up many possibilities. Initiatives outside the Berlin Mandate can be submitted to the Conference of the Parties or to its subsidiary bodies. But negotiations in this Ad Hoc Group are an exercise restricted to the terms of the Berlin Mandate. This Mandate promotes strengthening of the commitments by Parties listed in Annex I to the Convention and clearly establishes that new obligations will not be imposed on developing countries. This decision was adopted in the face of evidence that developed countries, which committed themselves to assume the leadership role and to take actions to modify trends which lead to climate change, had not adopted the policies and measures to which they had committed themselves, in order to return emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000. So as a group, they did not satisfy that commitment, although some individual countries are approaching achievement of that aim.

It is reasonable to predict that when the developed countries have shown by means of facts that they have decided to reduce their emissions and when conditions for the financial mechanism established by the Convention are finally appropriate to support the efforts of developing countries then, and at that time, they will be able gradually to assume a more active role in the undertaking which we have before us. In the meantime, the responsibility continues to be a matter for those who have greater financial and technological resources.