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Global Roundtable on Climate Change

Columbia University, New York

May 12, 2005

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you. It is truly an honor to be here before you today – within the historic halls of Columbia University and amongst such distinguished thought-leaders from the corporate, academic, religious and civil communities.

I acknowledge the President of Iceland, His Excellency Ólafur Ragnar Grimsson, who delivered a compelling address yesterday.

Furthermore, I must credit and thank Jeffrey Sachs for his diligence and vision – with regard to this seminal event, but also related to his work with the Millennium Development Goals. This event truly marks a historic milestone in that it brings together many of the best minds to address an issue with significant consequence upon our collective well-being.

My gratitude is further extended to Columbia professors Joseph Stiglitz, Geoffrey Heal, and Don Melnick for their efforts to assist my beloved Nation, Papua New Guinea.

The Global Challenge

The challenge we face as a result of global warming is truly staggering. The *Global Roundtable on Climate Change* offers an opportunity to focus on this timely and relevant struggle toward lasting climate stability.

As we have heard, many governments within the industrialized world are now framing policy to limit global temperature change to 2°C above pre-industrial levels. This will probably require stabilizing CO² concentrations below 450ppmv -- concentrations which currently stand at approximately 390ppmv and are rising at 0.5% per year.¹

Increasingly, it is becoming clear that this target may require almost draconian emissions reductions if left to Annex 1 countries alone – reducing emissions within industrialized nations 80% below 2000 levels by 2050.²

As this sobering realization settles in, world leaders are now acknowledging that emissions reductions will be required of ALL nations – industrialized and developing alike. However, this need not be a contentious issue, and properly framed, a willing-partnership can be established.

Within this context, I must highlight the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change findings that during the 1990's an estimated 20%-25% of annual GLOBAL carbon emissions were generated through land-use change – primarily from the degradation of forest resources.³

Scandalously, this significant source of carbon emissions – almost the same volume emitted annually by the United States – is currently excluded from the Kyoto Protocol.

In more stark terms, if the current rates of deforestation in Brazil and Indonesia were to remain the same through 2012, the emissions from the deforestation of these TWO nations ALONE would offset nearly 80% of the emission reductions gained from the Kyoto Protocol.⁴

As such, the case for the inclusion of forests emissions is fundamental to success. Candidly, this gaping hole in the Kyoto Protocol DEFIES LOGIC and brings the efficacy of the entire framework into serious question!

This is why my Nation is being proactive. Shortly, I will humbly propose a pathway forward.

Introduction to PNG

But first, let me tell you quickly about my Country. Papua New Guinea is truly a global treasure – there is no other place like it on earth. As Prime Minister, I say that totally without bias! But let me defend my position:

1. The second largest island in the world, with 5.5 million people; a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy now celebrating 30 years of independence.
2. The island of New Guinea has the world's third largest rainforest, after Amazonia and the Congo⁵.
3. Papua New Guinea has 832 living languages (languages, not dialects), more than any other country in the world⁶.

4. Papua New Guinea has approximately 200 species of mammals, 750 bird species (including 90% of the world's Birds of Paradise), 1,500 tree species, 20,000 species of higher plants and is considered to be florally the richest island on the planet⁷.
5. Overall, Papua New Guinea harbors more than 7 percent of the planet's biodiversity.⁸

However, while we have been endowed with breath-taking natural beauty and cultural diversity, such gifts also carry unique challenges.

As Prime Minister, I must pose as the central question for my government: how is economic development best achieved – defeating poverty while being responsible stewards of a unique and irreplaceable part of the global biodiversity AND contributing toward global climate stability?

Flawed Frameworks

As the speakers have highlighted within this Roundtable, the science is indisputable: rainforests contribute to global climate stability while underpinning our global ecosystem. Furthermore, if current rates of deforestation are not reduced sharply, the continued loss of forest poses a major threat to the global climate system.

But unfortunately, developing nations like Papua New Guinea must bear the primary economic burden of conserving these global assets ALONE!

While we strongly support the overall objectives of the Kyoto Protocol, a treaty my Nation has ratified, we also deem parts of the Kyoto Protocol fundamentally flawed. Respectfully, however, we have determined that working within the KP framework is the best way to facilitate meaningful change.

Our key point is that the Kyoto Protocol presently excludes from its provisions, and in particular from its benefits, existing rainforests and their carbon sequestration, as well as those carbon emissions associated with deforestation.

Let me highlight that Clause 3.3 of the Kyoto Protocol specifically provides incentives for industrialized countries to reduce deforestation. However, for developing countries, the Marrakesh Accords have subsequently slammed that door shut!

Some industrialized nations appear to support reform of tropical forest management in some forums, but chose to oppose promising mechanisms in others. This is a recipe for FAILURE – failure to meet development goals, failure to meet conservation goals, and failure to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations!

Developing Nations are again exploited and effectively forced to conserve the remaining Rainforests for FREE! This defies justice! More importantly, history shows it will not work!

This underhanded exclusion directly contributes to impoverishment, environmental degradation, gender inequality, lagging health and declining educational advancement for almost 2.7 billion people in over 60 developing nations⁹ which are home to the world's LAST tropical forests.

The Pathway Forward

We must forge a pathway forward. Honestly, at different levels, we all share the blame – my nation included. Now, however, it is time to focus our collective leadership upon effecting CHANGE.

Therefore, I have called for the formation of a 'Coalition for Rainforest Nations.' To support that call, my government has held discussions at the United Nations with representatives from Peru, Congo, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia – who, together with us, would constitute the largest expanse of rainforest globally under such an issue-specific coalition.

Our movement is gaining strength! Together, we seek to PARTNER with industrialized nations and forever eliminate the injustice woven into this environmental treaty.

The objective is to align the interests of rainforested developing nations with industrialized nations – with the latter offering markets for carbon off-sets and forest products. If we, the rainforested nations, reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, we should be compensated for these reductions – as are industrial nations. It is that simple!

Compensating us for our reductions can bridge global income disparities while preserving environmental resources for future generations. It is a winning market-based deal for both rich and poor countries.

In order to achieve this objective, we must agree to one or more of the following remedies:

- i. modify the Marrakesh Accords
- ii. encourage developing nations with rainforests to give notification under UNFCCC Article 4.2(g) for 'Kyoto Protocol Annex B' status – subject to 'appropriate' forestry emissions allowances
- iii. develop an Optional Protocol on deforestation which is linked to and complements the Kyoto Protocol, and/or
- iv. amend the Kyoto Protocol

To facilitate timely implementation, I propose that the key mechanical issues be resolved as follows:

- i. *Additionality*: Establish national deforestation baseline rates so that the effectiveness of policy interventions to reduce deforestation can be accurately judged.
- ii. *Leakage*: Address the forestry sector on a National level to offset the risk of leakage between projects.
- iii. *Permanence*: Develop a carbon banking mechanism that credits early action and debits compliance failures.
- iv. *Trading*: Create a framework within the international emissions trading system for trading credits issued against avoided forest emissions.

Consistent with UNFCCC Articles 3.4, 4.7, and 11.5, our proposal should be viewed as an 'environmentally sustainable developmental finance' mechanism. Properly harnessed, the carbon emissions markets can monetize our environmental resources and capitalize our sustainable development.

In summary, while we strongly support the intentions of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, equally, we feel strongly the time has come to begin corrective action – which must actively include developing nations in both emissions regulation and emissions trading markets.

However, I must emphasize that given today's rates of deforestation, we CANNOT WAIT until 2012 to resolve this issue!¹⁰

Conclusion

In closing, as I arrived here today, I was again struck by the distinguished 250-year history of Columbia University.¹¹ It caused me to question: in what state will we find the world 250 years from now?

While the birth of the Kyoto Protocol has offered hope, this framework is clearly insufficient to sustain our globe for the next 250 years! Lasting climate stability cannot be achieved with over half of the world sitting on the proverbial sidelines and over 50% of global carbon emissions being unregulated.

A recent report from the Commission of the European Communities recommended that 'devising incentives for developing countries to take part in international emissions

reductions may ... achieve wider participation...' The Commission also determined that 'a fresh look will have to be taken at how to halt deforestation of the world's forests.'¹²

We encourage this leadership and hope to capture this momentum!

Let me be clear, our intentions are NOT to take the pressure off the fossil-fuel emission reductions necessary within industrialized nations. However, the fragility of human existence necessitates bold action by all Nations.

Extending our hand in true friendship and partnership, we stand prepared to be accountable for our contributions toward global climate stability.

Let me again emphasize, the rainforests cannot be decimated simply because we run out of will to overcome complex issues! Candidly, our management of emissions frameworks related to tropical forests will both indicate and determine this outcome.

In this venerable seat of learning, a University older than this great Nation itself, I would like to close by highlighting our parallel with the droll observation Ben Franklin made on the occasion of signing the US Declaration of Independence: 'We must indeed all hang together, or most assuredly we will all hang separately.'

Every moment counts, let's act now!

Thank you!

END NOTES

¹ 'Winning the Battle Against Global Climate Change', Pages 3-4, Commission of European Communities 2005

² Union of Concerned Scientists, 2005

³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Special Report: Land-Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry, Summary for Policy Makers, 2000

⁴ Tropical Deforestation and the Kyoto Protocol: An Editorial Essay, Santilli, Moutinho, Schwartzman, Nepstad, Curran and Nobre 2005

⁵ World Resources Institute, compiled by Kevin Conrad

⁶ Summer Institute of Linguistics: www.ethnologue.com

⁷ World Bank, PNG Forestry & Conservation Report, #PID6506, 2001 (as updated.)

⁸ ibid

⁹ World Resources Institute, Tropical Forests and World Bank, Population Figures, compiled by Kevin Conrad

¹⁰ The date when a proposed Second Commitment Period for the Kyoto Protocol may come into effect.

¹¹ <http://c250.columbia.edu/>

¹² 'Winning the Battle Against Global Climate Change', Pages 5, 8-9, Commission of European Communities 2005