



**International Federation of Chemical, Energy,
Mine and General Workers' Unions
North American Regional Office**

Climate Change Treaty Address

***by Kenneth S. Zinn, ICEM North American Regional Coordinator, to the
Third Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate
Change in Kyoto, Japan, December 9, 1997***

Honorable Mr. President, distinguished ministers, delegates,
ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Kenneth Zinn and I am here today representing the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers Unions, known as the ICEM.

The ICEM is a global labor federation consisting of 450 affiliated unions representing 20 million workers in 114 countries on all five continents employed in the energy, chemicals, mining, pulp and paper, rubber, cement, glass, ceramics, and environmental services industries. I am proud to be here with affiliates of ours from Australia, South Africa, the United States, and Canada.

We are the men and women who bring you the world's energy that makes our economies run. Our members are the ones who work deep under the ground digging out coal, often, as the recent mine disaster in Russia showed once again, at great risk to their lives. They are the ones who are exposed to carcinogenic substances in the world's chemical plants and oil refineries. They are the ones on the front lines of radiation exposure in the world's uranium mines and nuclear power plants. They are the ones working at the natural gas wells and pipelines and in the electric power generating stations. They are the people who get up every day, work hard and play by the rules, pay the taxes that fund the governments who are represented here, and in those countries that allow people the right to vote, they are the citizens who elect you, the governments.

Simply put, without the sacrifice and hard work of our members and workers like them, society as we know it would grind to a halt. Yet, despite this fact, these negotiations have given almost no consideration of their fate and to the fate of their families and communities who depend on these jobs for their very survival.

The ICEM cares deeply about maintaining a healthy and safe environment for the people of today and the children who will inherit our world. The fact that we work in dangerous industries makes us doubly sensitive to matters of environmental safety. We accept that human activities may be causing a gradual warming of the earth's climate, and believe that leaders of today should confront this problem and not leave it for the next generation to solve.

With that said, however, it is very clear that these negotiations have failed by creating a negotiating framework that divides instead of unites the world's governments in collective action. Instead of a protocol that promote the common good, we are debating a protocol where some will be winners and others will be losers.

The negotiations have failed to take the most basic first step--the identification of a global atmospheric greenhouse gas concentration target. If we do not know what our global target is, how is it possible to determine the appropriate course of action to take in terms of emissions reductions and timetables and each country's equitable share in meeting that target? Some would have us go down a certain road without knowing our destination, and this seems particularly foolhardy given the stakes to the environment and the world's economy.

A protocol that commits certain nations to cuts in emissions without actually stopping global warming is a failed protocol. It is a scientific fact that the world cannot stop global warming if this protocol excludes countries that are today responsible for some 40 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions and will be responsible for more than half of the world's emissions in just 20 short years. We could literally shut down the economies of North America, Europe, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand tomorrow and the problem of global warming would still be with us.

If the parties sign a protocol that binds some countries to reduce emissions but not others, you will raise energy costs in some countries but not others, encouraging the export of capital and jobs and pollution, and in the process, simply transfer greenhouse gas emissions from one part of the world to another.

We reject creating one more incentive for multinational corporations to move production from one part of the world to another. The result will be little net change in global greenhouse gas emissions but tremendous economic disruption. In fact, the problem may be exacerbated if more energy-efficient operations are shut down in countries with reduction obligations and less energy-efficient operations are opened elsewhere. Global warming is a global problem and thus necessitates a global solution.

We accept the position by the developing country governments that they have overriding concerns to alleviate poverty, hunger and disease. We are committed to that same cause and our sense of global solidarity and economic justice demands that we stand with the poor and working people of those countries who are struggling to do just that.

But by the same token, the industrialized country governments must *also* worry about economic development in *their* countries, and we equally stand with the poor and working people of those countries who are struggling for jobs, growth and justice. The protocol must look out for the interests of poor and working

people in *all* countries. The workers and the poor--north and south--are the ones who will bear the brunt of any climate changes that result from global warming and we will bear the brunt of any economic policies adopted to deal with global warming. We seek climate solutions consistent with the objectives of Chapter 29.2 of Agenda 21: "The overall objective is poverty alleviation and full and sustainable employment, which contribute to safe, clean and healthy environments."

Just a few days ago, the G-8 countries held a summit in Kobe here in Japan to talk about the jobs crisis. World unemployment is at crisis levels. There are 36 million people unemployed in the OECD countries alone. Thus the notion that this protocol may throw more people out of work--again, for little or no environmental gain--is totally unacceptable.

For those who say the world can make very rapid changes in production and transportation to reduce emissions without economic disruption and job losses, we remain ready to work with you.

However, most evidence points to the contrary. One need only look at the double-digit unemployment rates and the shattered lives of workers and their families in the coalfields of the United Kingdom, and to the closed factories of eastern Germany to know that there is a severe human cost to making these changes in a short period of time.

A study just released by the International Labor Organization shows that 1.5 million coal miners alone will lose their jobs by 2010 should the governments assembled here agree to simply stabilize Annex I emissions at 1990 levels. For every coal miner who loses his job, there are at least four to five other workers who will also lose their jobs. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. If the lowest cost fuels are removed from the energy mix, industries that are highly energy-intensive will suffer as will individual energy consumers.

As the ILO study shows, the job losses will occur in both developed and developing countries even if this protocol binds only Annex I countries to emissions reductions. Coal miners in South Africa and Colombia will also suffer, as will oil workers in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Venezuela, Mexico, Nigeria and many other countries as well. In our global market place, the impact of what is done by industrialized countries will flow through to many developing nations.

We have a duty not to gamble with our members' livelihoods and we make no apologies for defending our members' jobs.

The answers to this problem are time, technology, and social justice frameworks that protect the most vulnerable in our societies. And these are the answers for both developed and developing countries. In the industrialized nations, time must be given to allow for the gradual turnover of capital stock, ensuring that any new

capital stock is as environmentally-friendly as possible. In those countries where capital stock is now turning over or being built for the first time, it should be incumbent on all nations to similarly ensure that the new stock emits fewer greenhouse gases. This means, in part, that through joint implementation or other means, state-of-the-art technology must be provided to countries that are newly developing or are in transition. These responsibilities fall on governments from both developed and developing countries, on private industry, and on the international financial institutions to provide the resources to allow this to happen.

Time must be given to the developing countries to grow--but grow smartly and humanely. This protocol is as much an economic instrument as it is an environmental instrument. As such, we must insist that social justice concerns be included, just as we would insist for any international economic treaty. It is not sufficient for any of our economies to grow if the people at the bottom don't get the benefit from it.

We must take note that some of the governments who today are demanding the right to grow unfettered are also ones that disallow any freedom of association for workers to join trade unions in their countries. "Development" without labor rights means development for some but not the many and we reject such a framework. This is as true for the industrialized countries as it is for the developing countries.

The government delegates here have an awesome responsibility. Your responsibility is both to the earth and to the people who inhabit it. We in the trade union movement will do our part but we must be allowed a seat at the table. We must be part of a social partnership with industry, government, and other affected parties.

It is essential that the world's governments get this right, and ensure that any new protocol actually accomplishes the goals of the Framework Convention without harming those people the world around who can least afford it.

Thank you.

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