

Statement by Ambassador Bagher Asadi
Chair, SBI (2007)
at
CSD-15 Session on Climate Change
1 May 2007, New York

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Colleagues,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to join you at this important discussion on climate change. And more so, to be back here at CSD, albeit under a different hat, to join old friends and colleagues – some of whom I am happy to see are still active in the intergovernmental body. The common thread linking us being the continued concern with how to make progress, in our respective forums, towards our collective global quest and drive for sustainable development. I am deeply grateful to you, Mr. Chairman, as well as to colleagues at the CSD Division, for making my participation at the Session possible.

As all of you know fully well, the 26th Session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 26) will commence its work next Monday in Bonn, Germany. We have a full agenda and a packed two-week programme – very much like yours – and quite a number of agenda items where we should make good, solid progress on our way to the next Conference of the Parties later in the year – an important session indeed.

In this intervention – believe me, Mr. Chairman, I have tried as hard as possible to keep it brief, but I am afraid I haven't been terribly successful - I will merely try to focus on some of the substantive issues on our agenda which may be of interest to CSD, and which, I hope, may contribute to your deliberations this afternoon on climate change and in CSD-15. Before turning to the substantive part, let me draw attention to an important distinction that has to be made between the work of the CSD and SBI. While the Commission represents a high-level political body pursuing the political process and discusses issues including climate change from a broad political perspective and the vantage point of sustainable development, the SBI is a working body of the Climate Change Convention which looks at specific areas and devises particular action plans aimed at Parties to the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. Nevertheless, the complementary nature of the work of our respective forums cannot be underestimated – as I am happy to note has been alluded to in your draft negotiating text.

The work of the SBI ensures that we do not lose sight of the ultimate objective of the Convention: *the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system*, without overlooking the priorities of developing countries for, inter alia, economic growth and development, and poverty eradication.

From that perspective, let me emphasize one of the critical issues before us; that is, the issue of adaptation. The fourth assessment report of the IPCC, along with the Stern report on the economics of action and inaction, have made it clear that climate change is already with us and that it is critically urgent to consider what specific action needs to be taken at the country or regional level to adapt to climate change, especially in developing countries which

are both more vulnerable to adverse effects and less capable financially and technically to deal with this.

Recognizing this fact, Parties to the Convention and its Protocol agreed to establish several funds to address adaptation. Two are already in operation, namely the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund, and the Adaptation Fund is under discussion. The Adaptation Fund has the specific purpose of assisting developing countries to fund activities aimed at adapting to these adverse effects. In doing so, developing countries - also referred to as non-Annex I countries - should take into account their national, social and economic priorities. In that regard, the work of the CSD can be of assistance by providing some political actions or by giving political impetus to the whole process of support to adaptation without losing sight of economic and social development priorities. And this is going to be an important agenda item for us in Bonn, and more so, in COP 13 in Bali. As already indicated, let me just reiterate, COP 13 is a very important session ahead of us.

At this stage the SBI is clearly fulfilling its role of the Convention body which looks at implementation of both the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol. This can be illustrated in practically every SBI agenda item. I have already mentioned adaptation, which is happening not only in developing but also in developed countries, and one should not forget mitigation because a lot of mitigation efforts are taking place in Annex I - that is, developed - countries.

With respect to mitigation efforts, a key development is taking place right now in those developed countries that are Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. This development is the establishment of the so-called assigned amounts; that is, of the quotas of greenhouse gas emissions that Annex I Parties are allocated under the Kyoto Protocol. A rigorous technical review of these amounts by international expert teams - coordinated by the UNFCCC Secretariat - is being conducted now. Later this year, the verified quotas will be approved by the Compliance Committee and then officially recorded, which will enable a start of the carbon-trading market under the Protocol. Market-based mechanisms will thus be put in place to facilitate the implementation of the Protocol, to the benefit of all stakeholders - and, needless to say, to the benefit of the global climate. The progress in the establishment of assigned amounts will be reviewed by the SBI this May and we will move this important development forward as much as possible.

Also at our session in May, we will review the status of review and reporting under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. The cornerstones of this system are the submissions of the so-called national communications by Annex I and non-Annex I Parties from which the least developed countries also prepare their national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs), the submissions of greenhouse gas emissions data by Annex I Parties, and a comprehensive technical review of the communications and data from Annex I Parties by international expert teams. This elaborate reporting and review system ensures the robustness and integrity of the whole climate change process, and it has also warranted significant efforts in capacity-building, in particular in developing countries. As a result, a large pool of experts, both from developed and developing countries, have been trained and are now available for reviewing and evaluating the national greenhouse gas emissions data submitted both under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.

Mr. Chairman,

I presume that all of us agree that there is still a long and difficult way to go towards achieving the ultimate goal of the Convention. Yet, one can say, with a certain degree of certainty, that all Parties without exception are taking the implementation of the Convention very seriously. And, moreover, there seems to be discernible movement towards a bigger political dynamism that would help buttress the achievements made thus far and take the process a step further. The recent discussion in the Security Council, fully reflective of the wide range of views on the table, did in fact drove the point home that everybody – on both sides of the development divide – agrees with the importance and urgency of making progress in the process, even though, I submit, with due consideration for such basic and revered principles as “common but differentiated responsibilities” and national characteristics and capabilities. Within this overall framework, we look forward, with anticipation, to the Secretary-General’s intention to organize a high-level exchange on climate change a few months down the line at the margins of the next General Assembly session, and to repeat his own words at the Council “to develop a broad consensus on the way forward”. Indeed we all need to dedicate all our best efforts to the development of such a broad consensus – gradual and incremental it might inevitably be. As we all now know, Secretary-General appointed earlier today three Special representatives on climate change.

Discussions in the SBI, despite widely diverging views – which I am afraid is the case in any and all intergovernmental forums - are always constructive, productive and of a practical nature – and I underline this latter aspect. As we see it, Parties are really talking about how to implement what was planned – and this is important. Consequently, I am confident that the willingness of all Parties to make this process move forward and work will prevail at the upcoming session of the SBI and I am looking forward to the challenges ahead of me as its Chair.

I hope I can count on the support of all delegates here at the CSD meeting. Many of you, I am sure, will also participate in the subsidiary bodies in Bonn in the next two weeks. Just too bad that there happens to be an overlap of one week between our two meetings.

In closing, **Mr. Chairman**, let me express the earnest hope that the political impetus of the CSD will positively affect the work of the SBI and will allow us to move forward faster in completing the work in the area of implementation, in particular for developing countries taking into account their social and economic goals. As a multilateralist – you can say, through and through – there is only one way forward; to strengthen effective international cooperation towards developing meaningful collective response to all our shared problems, across the board, including, for our immediate purpose, climate change.

I stop right here, **Mr. Chairman**, and thank all of you, again, for this unique opportunity. I will remain available for any further exchange this afternoon here, and in the next couple of days while still in New York – on the margins of this meeting hall and the more conducive area of the coffee-shop in the immediate vicinity.

Thank you very much.