

Environment Ministers' Communiqué held at Trieste, Italy, 2-4 March, 2001

– Excerpt –

The Environment Ministers of the eight major industrialised countries and the European Commissioner responsible for the Environment have met as a follow-up to their last meeting in Otsu (Japan) to discuss challenging environmental issues. Discussions centred on three key themes: I. Climate Change; II. Sustainable Development towards Johannesburg 2002; and III. Environment and Health. They called upon the Chair to forward this Communiqué to the Chair of the Genoa Summit of Heads of State and Government.

In the following only Section I is reprinted.*

* The full text of the Communiqué is to appear in *Conservation and Sustainable Development*, Oceana, Dobbs Ferry, New York.

I. Climate Change

A. Promoting timely global action to meet the challenges of climate change

3. "Emissions of greenhouse gases and aerosols due to human activities continue to alter the atmosphere in ways that are expected to affect the climate.

There is new and stronger evidence that most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities.

The globally averaged surface temperature is projected to increase by 1.4–5.8°C over the period 1990 to 2100. The projected rate of warming is much faster than the observed changes during the twentieth century." (Intergovernmental

Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), WG I, Third Assessment Report – January 2001.)

4. "Scientific studies show that human health, ecological systems, and socio-economic sectors (e.g. hydrology and water resources, food and fibre production, coastal systems, and human settlements), all of which are vital to sustainable development, are sensitive to changes in climate – including both the magnitude and rate of climate changes – as well as to changes in climate variability." (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Special Report, Regional Impacts of Climate Change: An Assessment of Vulnerability.)

5. We express our concern about the seriousness of the situation according to the findings of the IPCC report. We commit ourselves at the resumed COP6 to strive to reach agreement on outstanding

political issues and to ensure in a cost-effective manner the environmental integrity of the Kyoto Protocol, making full use of all opportunities, including ministerial meetings. A successful outcome at COP 6-bis is necessary to allow early entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. For most countries this means no later than 2002, with timely ratification processes.

6. We recognise the importance of continuing consultations on issues such as sinks and the Kyoto Mechanisms and compliance, to lay the basis for decisions at the resumed COP6.

We agree that efficient, transparent and clear rules on the Kyoto Mechanisms are important to achieve the goals of the Kyoto Protocol and that a comprehensive and strong compliance system, supported by a reliable system of monitoring, reporting and review will facilitate compliance and discourage non-compliance.

7. Furthermore, we commit to take the lead by strengthening and implementing national programmes and actions, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as to promote and disseminate environmentally sound technologies and practices and renewable energy sources.

In addition, we look forward to concrete recommendations from the G8 Renewable Energy Task Force established by the Heads of State and Government at the Okinawa Summit as stated in paragraph 66 of the Okinawa Communiqué.

8. Achieving the ultimate objective of

the Convention will require much greater efforts in developed countries, and developing countries. We reaffirm our responsibilities to take the lead in combating climate change. We also welcome those actions already being taken by developing countries and encourage them to strengthen their efforts in this field.

We recognise the importance of capacity building and technology transfer, as well as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), in order to assist and support developing countries in addressing climate change.

9. We recognise the findings of the IPCC that some countries may be particularly vulnerable to adverse effects of climate change, namely Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and least developed countries. We also acknowledge the need to continue supporting adaptation measures by those countries.

10. We recognise the importance of capacity-building and technology transfer, as well as Joint Implementation, in order to assist and support countries with economies in transition in addressing climate change.

B. Strengthening domestic actions

11. All G8 countries have already begun to commit themselves to take strong domestic actions to tackle global climate change. We note the benefit of showing demonstrable progress in the years ahead. G8 countries will submit transparent and

accountable information on domestic actions as required by the Climate Change Convention.

We confirm that the use of the Kyoto mechanisms will be supplemental to domestic actions.

12. We recognise that a firm consensus for action on climate change is needed and that all sectors of society must be called upon to play their part in implementing change. Addressing social and employment issues is a matter of fundamental importance to promoting consensus.

13. Using the opportunities and advantages of the market and sending the right signals to the market are important for effectively addressing climate change. G8 countries are introducing measures that may include market mechanisms and will promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. We applaud the many private companies, civic groups, and individuals that are working to reduce their emissions. We congratulate, for example, businesses that have adopted voluntary programmes, including innovative market-oriented approaches. These efforts demonstrate that the private sector, through the development of new technologies and the adoption of energy-efficient practices, can play a central role in meeting the challenge of climate change. We pledge to encourage and facilitate further voluntary actions by civil society now and to exchange information about how we can develop more effective public-private partnerships.

