

C Z E C H   R E P U B L I C

STATEMENT BY

H.E.   F R A N T I Š E K   B E N D A

The Minister of Environment

AT THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

TO

THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Berlin - April 6, 1995

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**Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,**

**The Czech Republic assumes full responsibility and cooperation in fulfilling the mandates of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Our support and involvement in protecting the global environment is closely aligned with our efforts in environmental protection in the Czech Republic.**

**As you know, the previous regime in the Czech Republic was preoccupied with a centrally controlled economy and systematically abdicated their responsibility to protect the environment and human health. Unfortunately, the result of this extensive development was severe damage and deterioration of our environment. The policies of the previous regime have placed a serious burden on our children and grandchildren. Clearly, this type of ignorance must be avoided on a global scale where the consequences may be irreversible and result in global disasters. In order to prevent global environmental damage, the precautionary principle must be applied in its full strength.**

**We are aware of the fact that the emissions of greenhouse gases are relatively high in our country as compared with the majority of our European neighbors. The reason for this is based on the previous practice of extensively utilizing coal based energy sources. The former system of government contradicted the principles of the free market and sustainable development. In the first stage of restoring a democratic society, this approach was abandoned by the Czech people and subsequently, after 1989 emissions of greenhouse gases decreased.**

Notwithstanding these positive developments, fears are sometimes expressed that the emissions of greenhouse gases will return to 1990 levels or even increase as a consequence of the current economic growth in the Czech Republic. Rough estimates of our present situation indicate that the on-going modernization of our industry, the gradual removal of energy subsidies and the positive impact of new and improved environmental legislation will prevent these emissions from returning to their previous levels. The government of the Czech Republic has also launched several programs to encourage energy savings and to enhance the use of renewable energy sources. In this respect, we have achieved synergy between our objectives for the transition process and our objectives for the protection of the environment

The Czech Republic is interested in international cooperation under the Framework Convention. We are fully aware that the stabilization of greenhouse gas emissions, which we hope to achieve by 2000, requires large changes in our industry, transport, agricultural and residential sectors. It will also be necessary to protect and care for our forests which represent the primary sinks for carbon dioxide and which have been heavily damaged by previous emissions of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides.

For these reasons, we support international cooperation to mitigate climate change and stabilize greenhouse gas emissions. We believe that positive results may occur through joint implementation of policies and measures as provided for in Article 4.2 of the Convention. The Czech Republic is very willing to cooperate with OECD and EC countries to share experience and coordinate national policies and measures in areas of interest.

**Finally, the Czech Republic, as a good neighbor of the Federal Republic of Germany, is pleased that the COP 1 is taking place in Berlin. I very much appreciate the efforts of our German friends to organize this conference in a cooperative spirit.**