



Statement by

Ms. Margaretha de Boer,

Netherlands Minister

for Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment,

at the First Session of the Conference of the Parties

to the United Nations Framework Convention

on Climate Change

at Berlin

on Wednesday 5 April 1995

Madam President,

First of all let me express my deep appreciation for your warm hospitality and for the excellent way this important conference has been organized.

Before I speak on behalf of the Government of The Netherlands, it is my pleasure to deliver a statement concerning an initiative on technology in connection with Climate Change.

The following OECD/IEA Member countries endorse this statement:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, and the European Commission.

Responding to the provisions under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with respect to development and enhancement of technologies, these countries reaffirm their commitment to promote and cooperate in the development and deployment of climate-friendly technologies in all relevant sectors, including the energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste management sectors.

These countries are willing to share the experience and benefits of this initiative, as appropriate, with other Parties.

They also wish to study and, where appropriate, to implement feasible options for utilising climate-friendly technologies and to reduce barriers to their deployment, with the aim of promoting the enhanced use of suitable technologies.

Recognising the efforts already undertaken in this area, including those being developed through the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) such as the IEA Implementing Agreements, these countries are launching:

a Climate Technology Initiative (CTI) as a linked set of national and international measures, practices and processes, including voluntary private sector activities, to accelerate development, application and diffusion of climate-friendly technologies in all relevant sectors,

including the following activities, each of which could be pursued by some or all of the participating countries, to:

- a) facilitate cooperative work between governments, quasi-government and private entities which are interested in actively promoting cost-effective technology diffusion and reducing the barriers to an enhanced use of climate-friendly technologies;
- b) promote the development of technology aspects of national plans and programs prepared under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- c) establish and strengthen the networks between regional renewable and energy efficiency centres;
- d) improve access to and enhance markets for emerging technologies;
- e) provide appropriate recognition to climate-friendly technologies such as the creation of international technology awards;
- f) promote technology demonstration projects;
- g) strengthen international collaboration on short/medium and long- term research, development and systematic evaluation of technology options;
- h) assess the feasibility of developing longer-term technologies to capture, remove or dispose of greenhouse gases and strengthen relevant basic and applied research.

These countries invite all interested Parties to cooperate in further elaborating and implementing the Climate Technology Initiative. They will inform the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the progress in further elaborating and implementing this Initiative, and invite the subsidiary bodies of the Conference of the Parties to take account of this Initiative as they develop their own workplans.

Madam President,

Now let me continue with the national part of my statement.

Climate Change is a problem of a magnitude and complexity hardly ever encountered before. The results of scientific research, as assessed in the IPCC-Reports, point ever more clearly to the serious risks climate change brings with it.

We cannot afford to wait for a 100% probability. That is the precautionary principle, laid down in the Convention.

We have to act decisively, we have to act now.

We all know this, and yet progress has been slow so far.

Why?

Why do we find it so difficult to agree on measures that deep in our hearts we know are necessary? Are we really prepared to endanger our common future in favour of short-term priorities?

The industrialised countries know that they will have to change their consumption and production patterns in order to avoid the serious dangers of climate change.

Our colleagues of the developing countries are - understandably and rightly - primarily concerned with the economic and social development of their peoples, and point out that **their** development should not be hampered by measures taken to mitigate the consequences of **our** way of life.

In the North we have to develop sustainable lifestyles by cutting back on activities that endanger the environment both at home and abroad; in the South sustainable lifestyles will have to be developed without harming the environment.

This is a common challenge, even if we have differentiated responsibilities.

Madam President,

In September 1994 The Netherlands presented its first National Communication. This communication shows that The Netherlands will fulfill its commitment under the Convention. Moreover, we confirmed our target to achieve a CO₂ emission reduction of 3-5% by the year 2000 compared to the year 1990. In order to reach this goal sustained efforts are required, not only by the government of The Netherlands, but also by its citizens and all sectors of society.

A broad range of instruments is needed. One of those is energy taxation. A surcharge on natural gas, electricity and mineral oils, for the household and small business sector, will take effect on the first of January 1996. This is combined with other measures for the industrial sector. In the next three years the tax will be raised to the equivalent of approximately ten US dollars per barrel of oil in 1998.

The revenues of this surcharge will not just end up in the coffers of the minister of Finance. Taxpayers will be compensated elsewhere. This is mainly done by changes in the system of income taxes. In this way the use of environmental resources is taxed more heavily, while taxes on labour will be reduced.

Madam President,

This convention is not only about action until the year 2000. Our longer term efforts will determine whether we can keep climate change under control. Therefore it is absolutely necessary to agree as soon as possible on action for the period after the year 2000. In that period we need to achieve substantial reductions of greenhouse gas emissions from industrialised countries. I think a reduction of one to two percent annually for those

countries together is necessary to control climate change and to allow developing countries to pursue their necessary development.

A related important feature of the Convention is the assistance provided to developing country Parties. Of course, The Netherlands contributes its share to the Global Environment Facility. In addition The Netherlands is expanding its bilateral programme on climate change.

This programme seeks to assist developing country Parties, on request, in the development of national policies and programmes to mitigate climate change and to facilitate adequate adaptation.

Madam President,

As a token of support for the Convention and its implementation I have decided to make available 200,000 Guilders to be used for the organisation of the January 1996 workshop on non-governmental inputs.

As I said, climate change will affect us all, and that ought to make us humble.

We have to keep in mind that nature can easily do without us, but we cannot do without nature.

A sound environment is not a luxury, it is the basis for sustainable development, for the very life of present and future generations.

I thank you for your attention.