

Denmark

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**MILJØ- OG ENERGIMINISTERIET**

MINISTRY OF  
ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Statement by

Minister for Environment and Energy

Svend Auken, Denmark

at the first Conference of the Parties to the  
Framework Convention on Climate Change

Berlin, April 5th 1995

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Mr. Chairman,

It has to be done.

It can be done.

Global warming. Climate change. Weather instability. Natural disasters in rapid succession. Those dangers are not the awesome facts of the future. They are the manmade risks of tomorrow. In fact, the climatic record of the recent past suggests that they are here already.

Risks can be averted. Manmade dangers of climate change can be met by concerted action by the international community. And we must act now. If we sit around and wait for the definite scientific proof for whether man made increases in concentrations of CO2 and other greenhouse gasses have already caused global warming and made our climate change, we fail our responsibility. We must act before it is too late.

In Rio the climate convention was signed. And now it has become international law. That was a major achievement.

But decisive action has not followed the golden commitments in the convention. The rich world will not stabilize its emissions of CO2 and other greenhouse gasses by the end of this decade.

NGO's, experts and governments have not been able to sway public opinion with regard to necessary reforms: Energy savings, renewable energy, combined power and heat, restructuring of traffic patterns and of industrial production methods.

The result is depressing. As the problem grows, the political will to action seems to wane.

Will the necessary changes hurt and cause massive hardships of our peoples? I don't think so. I am confident that we can stabilize and then reduce the dangerous gasses without lowering our standards of living.

Let me mention the example of my own country, Denmark. From 1970 to 1990 we increased our GNP by more than 50% while keeping overall use of energy stable. In 1990 the Danish Parliament decided to take necessary action and actually reduce CO2 emissions by 20% by 2005 - and I expect by 5-10% even before the year 2000.

During these very days the Danish Parliament is fretting over a plan that will bring forth one quarter of the reduction - that is 5% - through a mix of taxes on industry's emission of CO2 (as we have been charging our households for some years), binding and enforceable reduction agreements with individual companies and return of the taxrevenue to business by lowering indirect labour costs and grants to new investments in energy saving.

We have shown that this can be done without curtailing growth rates and competitiveness of the Danish economy. It is a question of political determination and popular support.

The task of CO2 reductions is not an easy one. But it can be done as Denmark is determined to prove. If all OECD-countries undertook the same obligation, it sure would enhance our chances of success!

Denmark has consistently supported the fixing of a reduction target in OECD-countries for the time after the year 2000. It is no secret that we see a 20% reduction by 2005 as a necessary and also a realistic target. But we are of course prepared to negotiate on the basis of the common EU-mandate and the green paper proposal. We want the future process to be ambitious and constructive. The World environment needs our action now.

We are also prepared to work together with less developed countries. Not as an alibi for inaction at home, but as a true cooperative effort.

Already Denmark gives more than 1% of its GNP in overseas development assistance, but we have decided to reach the target of 1,5% in 2002 - giving emphasis to the environment.

Non-OECD countries have their responsibility to shoulder.

But the understandable precondition must be that we - the real culprits - in the rich world clean up our mess first.

It has to be done.

It can be done.

We can do it.

Danish Ministry of Environment and Energy  
First Conference of the Parties  
28 March - 7 April 1995  
Berlin

4 April 1995

**Keywords to the Statement of the Danish Minister of Environment and Energy, Mr. Svend Auken, at the First Conference of the Parties, Berlin, 5 April 1995.**

Madame President  
Dear Colleagues  
Ladies and Gentlemen

**The Greenhouse Effect Must Be Stopped.**

- The fine equilibrium of our planet's climate system has become upset.
- Man's emissions of greenhouse gases, and especially of carbon dioxide, are increasing. And during the last 150 years, the atmosphere's content of CO<sub>2</sub> has risen by 30 percent.
- IPCC tells us that a continuing increase in CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gasses in atmosphere will cause a global warming.

**The worst Environmental Problem.**

- While scientists continue to discuss whether climate changes caused by man are already apparent, major insurances companies are going bankrupt as a consequence of recent catastrophes. Reinsurers are no longer in any doubt: the global warming has caused increases in the extent and frequency of natural catastrophes. Climate changes are one of the most important reasons for a rise in the number of insurance claims.
- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from energy production, transport, heating and

manufacturing are in the process of creating perhaps the largest environmental problem in our time.

### **Economy Before the Environment**

- In Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the industrialized countries committed themselves to emit no more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere in the year 2000 than they did in 1990.
- And how is it going?
- Things do not look good. Unfortunately, it appears that in this area, too, the industrialized countries have placed economic concerns above the environment.
- Emissions of greenhouse gases have not been reduced. Environmentally sound energy technology and renewable energy have not become as prevalent as they need to be, and too little has been done to increase energy efficiency. There has been hesitation in imposing CO<sub>2</sub>-taxes and the number of private vehicles is increasing recklessly.
- In short, the affluent countries have not been willing to take measures which might be seen as a reduction in living standards, i.e. material consumption.
- However, this fear is unfounded. Today, it is technically possible to maintain a living standard while limiting consumption of the resources which create CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. What is lacking is the political will and a recognition of the seriousness of the enhanced greenhouse effect.

### **Danish Initiatives**

- The Danish Government and Parliament have decided that by the year 2005 CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions must be reduced by 20 percent as compared to the 1988 level. This requires CO<sub>2</sub>-taxes and more efficient use of energy supplies and electricity.
- I am certain that Denmark can achieve this target without diminishing the competitiveness of its business sector and without any reduction in the living standard of the population. Quite the contrary in fact.



### **Clearing Your Own Backyards**

- Through the Climate Convention the industrialized countries are committed to providing financial and technological assistance to the developing countries. Therefore, the Danish Parliament has decided to increase development and environmental assistance to 1 1/2 per cent of GDP by the year 2002.
- Some of this assistance will naturally be used to promote the development of environmentally sound technology, including energy technology.
- However, the most important prerequisite for achieving the objective of the Climate Convention is, and will continue to be, that the rich countries bring their own houses in order.

### **The Future**

In conclusion, madame president, I wish to highlight four points:

- firstly, I want -in full agreement with our EU Council conclusions - to urge all Annex-I countries to make sure that they fulfil the commitment to stabilize emissions by 2000. We know from our own experience that this is technically and administratively possible; all it really takes is political courage;
- secondly, I urge all of us to do our utmost to take the next step before we leave Berlin. I hope that this conference will do so. And I am certainly willing to help you, madame president, towards the realisation of a mandate. This will ensure the negotiation of a new set of commitments - centered upon progressive limitations and reductions of greenhouse gases for the post 2000 period - in the shortest possible period of time.
- thirdly, I want to stress that I don't believe in doomsday scenarios. The climate change is a real threat, and many of our actions will only aggravate this threat. Our common future depends on our actions today. We better, therefore,

make sure that the Berlin mandate really is a big step forward.

- finally, madame president, I want say that the only and simple answer to the threat of climate change is to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions. In doing so we need an increased internationally solidarity. Without this we will not be able to speak of a common future.

Thank you, madame president.