

5th. plenary



**Statement**  
**by**  
**Her Excellency Dr. Imren AYKUT**  
**Minister of Environment**  
**Republic of Turkey**

**Buenos Aires, 11 November 1998**

Madame President, Honorable Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a special pleasure to congratulate You Madame, on your election for Presidency of the Fourth Conference of Parties. I am confident that during your tenure of office, this Conference will be able to handle all delicate issues in a satisfactory manner.

May I also express, through you, sincere thanks of my delegation to the Executive Secretary, Mister Cutajar, and the Secretariat for an excellent organization. I would also like to express my thanks to the Government of Argentina for its generous hospitality.

Madame President,

It is now widely acknowledged that protection and improvement of the environment plays a vital role in sustainable development. Due to the paramount need to reconcile the process of development with its impact on the environment, in other words, to accomplish sustainable development, the environment today occupies an important place on the governments' agendas.

Turkey, giving due attention to environmental issues has been participating in all the international efforts for the protection of environment. To this end, she is a party to thirty-five international conventions, protocols and other bilateral agreements, such as the UN Convention to Combat the Desertification, the Biodiversity Convention and the Montreal Protocol in which Turkey plays an important role among Article five countries to reduce the consumption of ozone depleting substances.

My Government recognizes the need for joint efforts to be exerted by almost all countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. With this understanding in mind, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change has been presented to the Parliament for ratification. But, the Parliament is of the opinion that the obligations imposed on Turkey by the convention is not in conformity with its economic development.

However, policies and measures under practice in my country aim at improving the situation to the extent possible by using relevant means and sources available nationwide.

The National Environmental Action Plan was finalized with the collaboration of the World Bank and endorsed in May 1998. The strategic objectives of this Plan foresees the following:

- reduce and prevent pollution,
- improve access to basic environmental infrastructure and services,
- encourage sustainable resource use,
- support sustainable environmental practices, and
- minimize vulnerability to environmental hazards.

Madame President,

I have to bring to the attention of the Conference that Turkey is rapidly industrializing, urbanizing and social development continues progressively. This process has a dynamic nature. Therefore, the electrical energy demand will be at least twofold within a decade.

In order to meet this increasing energy demand, the national energy policy foresees wider utilization of new and renewable sources of energy, such as geothermal, solar, wind and hydro. In this respect, already four hundred thirty thousand tons carbondioxide emission reduction per year has been achieved by providing geothermal domestic heating for fifty thousand residences. As planned, it will come eventually to a reduction of eight point six million tons per year after covering one million residences.

Furthermore, in the year two thousand and ten, Turkey will be in a position to utilize seventy per cent of its hydro potential in comparison to twenty nine per cent in nineteen ninety seven.

Another aspect of our endeavors for reducing greenhouse gas emissions together with private sector is to divert energy supplies to natural gas. In the year two thousand and ten, the total natural gas consumption will be around fifty billion cubic meters as of ten billion cubic meters in nineteen ninety seven, which alone will reduce carbondioxide emissions more than fifty per cent against a business as usual scenario.

Madame President,

While concluding my remarks I have to emphasize once again that although we are not a Party to the convention, we have made available to the Conference our National Report on Climate Change.

On this occasion, my appreciation goes to you, Madame President, on your close attention given to our position and I have to underline here that we will be satisfied if the review process of Turkey be finalized during the Fifth Session of the Conference of the Parties

I thank You Madame President.