

Statement by Iceland
H.E. Siv Fríðleifsdóttir
Minister for the Environment

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

This is a week that will be remembered for a long time. We are at a turning point in the international effort to make the Kyoto Protocol ready for implementation. Three years of hard work on important issues are behind us. Important political decisions remain to be taken in the days ahead. Those decisions must ensure that early action will be taken to benefit the atmosphere and future generations.

Mr. President,

There are plenty of opportunities to tackle the problem of climate change and it is for us at this meeting to create the right incentives for the private sector and the general public to act in support of the aims of the Kyoto Protocol. Increasing the use of renewable energy is one of the more important actions that we can take in order to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Iceland has for a long time put great emphasis on harnessing renewable energy sources and as an example of that two thirds of the energy used in my country to day is from renewable sources geothermal and hydro electric energy.

I believe that the draft decisions before us contain all the key building blocks required to construct a sound reporting and review system, strong compliance system and the mechanisms to ensure cost-effective implementation of the Protocol.

Reducing the rate of deforestation and increasing carbon uptake by sinks are both important actions to combat climate change. Rules on the inclusion of these activities in the accounting system should be robust, transparent and manageable.

Mr. President,

We are of the opinion that it is imperative that all Annex – B countries will be able to ratify the Protocol. It is therefore important to remember that no international environmental agreement is so complete that it does not need to take into account

special circumstances. When difficulties arise for individual parties these must be attended to and the solutions must be designed in such a way that they do not create loopholes or weaken the Protocol. Attention to special circumstances is not in any way in a contradiction to environmental integrity.

Mr. President,

It is my sincere wish that our work in the coming days will result in decisions, that will enhance actions and facilitate early ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.