

**Ninth Session of the Conference of the Parties
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
Milan, 10th of December, 2003 – High Level Plenary Session**

**Address of H.E. Mr. Miklós Persányi,
Minister of Environment and Water of the Republic of Hungary,
President of Ninth Session of Conference of the Parties
of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change**

**Distinguished delegates,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

- It is my distinct honour and great pleasure to welcome you to the High-level segment of the Ninth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- When I take this opportunity to welcome you to the beautiful city of Milan I would like to express our gratitude on behalf of all participants of the Conference to the Italian Government represented here by Mr Altero Matteoli, Minister of Environment and Regional Development and to all hosts. And special thanks for the opportunity to be able to visit again a country so rich in cultural, artistic and historic values.
- Last week I visited the famous cathedral of Milan. When admiring one of the most perfect buildings I've ever seen, learnt one Italian expression about the body that organised the works of the cathedral: la fabbrica del Duomo. The construction works took 436 years. Pretty long time, but the result is convincing.
- Well, we are constructing here a building that would fit better for the human mankind. We have to make strong base for the building and design very carefully the structure. Like the constructors of the Milan Cathedral did it. The difference is that we do not have more than four hundred years...
- Ladies and gentlemen, I promised in my first address that I would repay the trust you had place in me with hard work. Before coming to Milan, I was warned of your tendency for long hours and difficult meetings. I have seen you at work these past week, and may I note your reputation is more than justified.
- But make no mistake. Your **commitment to action and leadership** demonstrated in these meetings halls has already had a significant policy impact and will continue to do so for years to come.
- Ministers responsible for environmental affairs of almost 100 countries are present here today. To my view their presence is much more than a solemn act designed according to the usual choreography of this kind of gatherings. This is also a strong proof of commitment we take for the sake of our common home.

- As these conferences have progressed, nations have advanced their implementation of the Convention and seriously begun their preparations for entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. **In turn, a rapidly-growing range of national actions has been set in motion and genuine progress is being achieved.**
- Governments have begun implementing national legislation, while private sector corporations, local authorities, international institutions, and non-governmental organizations and others are working extensively on a host of initiatives.
- Through your tireless efforts, the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol now are the only viable options for preventing dangerous interference with the global climate.
- Your dedication to the development of these agreements provides the strongest evidence that you appreciate the **urgency of the problem** we all face — more and more with every passing year. The world community has recently faced an unprecedented number of extreme weather events —droughts, floods, storms— which are consistent with model projections supported by the scientific community.
- With the negative impacts of climate change beginning to affect physical and biological systems, global crop yields are projected to decrease, which in turn, could lead to an increase in hunger and poverty. As those with the least resources are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, the need to reduce vulnerability and enhance the adaptability of societies could not be more pressing.
- One of my favourite professors in University used to tell us a tale. It was about some frogs who, in a cold morning like today, managed to find a place with warm, pleasant water. They really enjoyed themselves until the water became warmer and warmer. Not suprisingly because they jumped into a big pot for boiling water. The frogs started to discuss what to do but made no agreement until it was too late to get out...
- Might we, humans be the smart frogs quarrelling on the outcome? No, I don't think so. I am unalterably optimistic. Perhaps some of you remember that in my first address I spoke of the importance of **hope**.
- The sheer enormity of the challenges we face and the difficulty issues we must confront can cause us to lose hope and dwell on our differences. But, as your efforts demonstrate, multilateralism and the United Nations are more important than ever, as **more international cooperation provides our strongest, best hope**. Like this planet we share, there is genuine common ground.
- I wish you all a fruitful meeting. Thank you.