

**STATEMENT OF  
MS. ELISA FERREIRA  
MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT OF PORTUGAL**

**BEFORE THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES  
TO THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

**KYOTO, DECEMBER 8, 1997**

STATEMENT TO PLENARY BY MS. ELISA FERREIRA MINISTER FOR  
ENVIRONMENT OF PORTUGAL

MR. PRESIDENT, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES

I would like to begin by expressing Portugal's full support for the speech made by Mr. Lahure, in the name of the European Union and her member states.

Climatic alterations represent the most urgent of all environmental problems. This conference should mark the beginning of a public policy intended to safeguard the stability of the climate, a common good for all mankind.

There is an urgent need to implement a strategy to maintain climatic stability and this conference should lead to a binding agreement over future initiatives. However any agreement will only be effective if founded on the principles stated in the Framework Convention. These principles are:

Horizontal equity: countries sharing the same conditions should be treated equally, in the spirit of article 3.1.

Vertical equity or differentiation: countries in different circumstances should be treated in different manners, in the spirit of article 4.1.

In practice these principles imply differentiation which reflects the specific characteristics of each country.

The agreement established between the member states of the European Union is a concrete example of the operability of these principles. Portugal supports the terms of this agreement and the practical means of its implementation - the community bubble - as the most cost effective means, accompanied by appropriate policies and measures, to achieve a substantial reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases.

Portugal is a country within Annex I but has very specific characteristics when compared to the majority of other countries:

Portugal's level of economic development and average energy consumption per capita is well below the average for Annex I countries;

Portugal's per capita emissions of greenhouse effect gases are also well below those of other countries: in 1990 the emission of carbon dioxide per capita was 4 tons which is by far the lowest per capita level in European Community.

Portugal has an important share of renewable energy within national energy resources, particularly hydropower and as a result of a decision by the Portuguese government, nuclear energy is not considered as an option.

On this basis it is obvious that Portugal cannot reduce her emissions by the year 2010, without undermining her economic growth and the possibility of bringing the living standards of her citizens closer to that of the more developed countries.

Portugal does however agree to maintain her expected emissions of greenhouse gases at a level 5.7 tons per inhabitant in 2010, a level which will be, again, far below that of any other European Union country and thereby of any OECD country.

In this context, we support the position expressed by the European Union in terms of global reduction of emissions by the year 2010. In the spirit of the Framework Convention, Portugal will reinforce a set of policies aiming to limit emissions such as:

Diversification of sources of fossil fuel energy, with the introduction of natural gas from 1996 as a substitute for petroleum and coal. It is estimated that by 2010 around 12% of primary energy needs will be met by this new energy source.

Rationalisation of energy use in all sectors of the economy.

Better management of the transport system and infrastructure.

Reforestation and expansion of forest areas.

Application of new economic instruments for energy management.

Portugal is making a significant effort to limit the growth of its emission of greenhouse gases. Given the characteristics of her economy it would not be realistic, however, in terms of either technical viability or economic and social terms, to require a greater effort than that already being undertaken.

We do everything possible, because we are convinced that it is necessary to defend the climate, a public good, but we believe that success depends on the credibility of compromises as well as co-operative shared solutions.

Mr. President

Climatic alterations concern all mankind.

The greatest responsibility for the creation of this environmental problem rests with the industrialised countries. These are the countries which continue to produce the majority of emissions and it is these countries which in the short and medium term must implement the greatest reductions. But this commitment is not in itself sufficient.

In the long term, all countries, without exception, must participate and make a contribution in accordance with their economic capacity to limit global emissions. Portugal makes a commitment to this solution and thus supports the position of the European Union as a realistic and equitable response to our most significant environmental challenge.