

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,

- Please allow me to devote my first words to appreciation. I very much appreciate the efforts made during the past year by His Excellency Mr. Baalu, my distinguished colleague, President of COP 8, and all the members of the Bureau in a good cooperation with the Secretariat. Thank you very much on behalf of all Parties.
- And want to express to you **all** my appreciation for the trust you have placed in me. I am determined to do my best to deserve the confidence of the Parties. The Annual Session of the Conference provides an opportunity for a gathering of government delegates, experts and representatives of various organizations. And what I can promise you right now, at the beginning of the Session, is **hard work**.
- Of course, I do not promise you 'blood sweat and tears' as Sir Winston Churchill promised his people. Instead, through hard work, I want to promise you a better understanding of each other's position, a promotion of cooperation, and a higher level of confidence among the parties.
- We need a collegial spirit because all of us need to take home a promise of a safe future for our children. We need positive thinking and we must focus on issues which unify us and not on those which divide.
- I, personally, will **not** spare any energy from guiding the work of the Conference toward new achievements in light of the ultimate objective and principal goals set in Climate Change Convention. And I would like to input an encourage **all** delegates to join me in this effort for the success of COP9.
- It will not be an easy task, I know. First, we have dealt with an **unusual business** for a long time. The Parties are committed to struggle with a phenomenon whose nature and behaviour have not yet been fully clarified by science. However, we know for sure that we have interfered with the the Earth's atmosphere by emitting rapidly increasing amounts of greenhouse gases into it. We cannot rely on oracles to tell us the future and what to do. But scientific knowledge on the highly probable consequences is increasing, and we should take this into account when we make further decisions at all levels.
- I admire the collective wisdom of the Parties who, despite the uncertainties, decided to act together and create a world-wide framework to cope with the alarming hazards. They established our Convention in 1992 based on a **principle** whose importance cannot be emphasized enough. As all you know, the **precautionary principle** says that the lack of full scientific certainty should **not** be used as an excuse to **postpone** action when there is a threat of any serious or irreversible damage.
- All of us carry the responsibility, and nobody is in the position to neglect or postpone action to cope with the hazard of the global climate change. Always keeping in mind the priority of precaution, the steadily-growing community of the Parties has successfully taken the first steps.

- The Convention provides a coherent framework as well as several useful tools and actions for addressing the challenges of climate change and for promoting sustainable development.
- The Parties have made important decisions to meet their initial commitments. According to the Convention, the developed country Parties agreed to take the lead, but not all of them could fulfil the aim of limiting their greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2000. We should also recognize that many developing countries implemented important measures towards their sustainable development and more climate-friendly production patterns.
- The next step, in 1997, was the **Kyoto Protocol** that imposed legally binding provisions on Annex I Parties to reduce their emissions. As a matter of fact, the importance of this legal instrument was demonstrated by the very large number of States that ratified it and wish to proceed with its implementation – even though the Protocol has yet not entered into force.
- I hope that we all agree that we need to follow the path we chose and we should never forget that human-induced global environmental change presents a risk to our common future.
- I emphasize this because there are indisputable facts which urge **more effective measures** to preserve the climate of the Earth. According to data which we will thoroughly examine during the Session, **the emission of greenhouse gases is steadily increasing**. The **link** between the higher concentration of these gases in the atmosphere and human activities causing these emissions is already unquestionable. The scenarios by scientists on the future behaviour of the global climate are different, but **all are alarming**.
- This is why I am so confident that we share the same endeavour. We all should contribute to the **progress and take important decisions** during the present session. These actions in implementing our past and new decisions will certainly require the **support and close co-operation of all Parties** during this session in Milan, as well as afterwards. More generally speaking, reinforced domestic actions and enhanced international collaboration are necessary in all the fields identified and agreed by us in and since 1992.
- I will do my best **to facilitate this co-operation** as President of COP 9. I attach great importance to **building and reinforcing confidence** between the different groups of Parties, as well as to strengthening the cooperation between the stakeholders who represent the major groups of our societies. I am ready to work together with all delegations, and I am open to all ideas and suggestions which move us closer to our common goals. In exchange I just ask for a **constructive approach** from all of you.
- Coming from a country which went through dramatic political, social and economic changes within the last few years, I have learned that there are no hopeless situations, just people without hope. I can promise you that I will work hard to understand the different needs and interests of the Parties. And from listening to and understanding each others words, I am confident that we will be able to harmonize our interests and step forward. The common goal, to guard our homes against an incalculable global hazard, **orders us** to act together.
- Ladies and Gentleman! I am full of hope. Please share this feeling with me. Please remember: there are no hopeless situations just people without hope. If we were people without hope, we should not have come to Milan. But here we are.
- I wish all of us a very successful Conference! Thank you.