

**Statement by Mr. Noel Dempsey,  
Minister for the Environment and Local Government,**

**Ireland**

**at the 3rd Conference of the Parties to  
the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change  
Kyoto, 8 - 10 December, 1997**

Mr President, Distinguished Delegates,

Since the 1st Conference of the Parties in Berlin two and a half years ago, the Second Assessment Report of the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change has left us in no doubt about the real threat posed by climate change. If allowed to continue, it will have profound effects on our environment, our economies, our children and our children's children.

For these reasons, this Conference must successfully conclude the process started in Berlin and mark the beginning of a new phase in our determination seriously to tackle the issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Decisive action is needed. It is our responsibility to take that action.

A start has been made. National communications under the Convention outline the policies and measures which have already been put in place to limit emissions.

In Ireland, we have intensified our actions, focusing on energy conservation and renewable energy programmes - where tax reliefs for certain projects were introduced in our recent budget. We are improving building insulation standards. We are pursuing a strategy aimed at greater use of public transport, and we have an extensive afforestation programme. A major study is now underway to assist us in identifying how best to reinforce our existing action and adopt additional policies and measures to limit our emissions.

It is clear, however, that efforts to date, both at the global and national level, have not been enough to ensure reasonable progress towards the ultimate objective of the Convention. We are here to state our ambition for the future, and to define in real terms the means to achieve that ambition. Our vision for the future must be matched by action now.

Mr. President, in these final few days of the negotiations under the Berlin Mandate, we must agree on the extent of the additional efforts to be made to reduce climate change. In this regard I wish to record our full support for the position of the EU as set out by the Luxembourg Presidency. The EU wishes to achieve the maximum joint effort by Annex I Parties at this meeting so that the ultimate objective of the Convention is brought that one step nearer fruition. It is first and foremost a matter for developed countries to take the lead; I appreciate the emphasis which developing countries must at present place on poverty eradication.

In regard to the commitment to be made here by the EU and its Member States, it is important to recognise that all Member States will be contributing to the achievement of the reduction target applicable to the EU. In the case of Ireland, it is worth noting that, without firm action, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions could be as high as 55% above 1990 levels in 2010 according to recent independent projections. In the context of the EU proposals, Ireland has adopted an indicative target to limit growth of greenhouse gas emissions to 15% over the same period.

Targets, particularly legally binding targets, are necessary to give shape and substance to our ultimate objective. But we must be clear and firm about means of achievement. Concrete policies and measures will be required to ensure the changes in production and consumption patterns which are implicit in the achievement of the targets we will agree in the next day or so.

In the longer term, worldwide commitment to the effective implementation of policies and measures will deliver the necessary containment of emissions. No one country can act on its own to protect the global climate system. Internationally coordinated actions are the most environmentally effective and the most cost effective. One positive example is the Climate Technology Initiative. Since its launch at COP 1 it has achieved important progress and is well placed to enhance and develop its activities for the future.

Finally Mr. President, our efforts to deal with climate change, and our success here will be a very good measure of our commitment to sustainable development.

I would like to join my colleagues in thanking most sincerely our hosts, the Japanese Government, for their hospitality and arrangements for the Conference. I hope that the effort they have invested will be rewarded with a worthwhile Kyoto Protocol.