

S t a t e m e n t

*by Mr. Miloš Kužvart,
Minister of the Environment of the Czech Republic
at
the Fourth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate Change in Buenos Aires*

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege to have been given this opportunity to address the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change. I am very pleased that the 4th Session of the Conference is being held here, in this beautiful city, Buenos Aires. As I visit this country, Argentina, I recall Ambassador Raúl Estrada and the significant role he played in Kyoto during the very difficult process of accepting the Protocol. We are now approaching the next step which focuses on meeting the requirements of this very important document.

Modernization and industrialization have had a tremendous negative impact on our environment, and we are now facing environmental crises. The issue of global warming is one of the most serious environmental problems today. This year, 1998, has shown us that we undoubtedly live with climate variability. Unfortunately, some countries and their populations have been unable to cope with the climate extremes that are becoming all too common. China, Bangladesh, Mexico struggled with flooding recently as a result of extreme rains. East Africa suffered extreme rains and floods, while Indonesia, Brazil, and the Caribbean region suffered droughts and fires occasioned by the El Niño phenomenon. My country, the Czech Republic, also recognized in 1997 and 1998 the devastating impact of flooding and its heavy costs. In the face of the impending crisis of global warming, it is time to change our daily lifestyles, which are often closely connected with energy consumption, and to modify conventional practices. Thus, I believe that the 4th Session of the Conference is an important step toward tackling global warming in the coming century through the united efforts of all the world's people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Moving towards this goal, the Czech Republic, as a future Party to the Protocol, feels its responsibility for meeting the Kyoto reduction target. In addressing the climate change issue there are a wide range of policies and measures that have been developed at the national level and that depend on a broad range of instruments. They are based on a set of policies and measures, which were prepared for their application at the national level during this period of economic transition. They are primarily oriented toward the supply and demand energy sectors, renewable energy sources, transportation and forest sectors.

Although Czech greenhouse gas emissions are still below the 1990 level by more than 20%, our Government is prepared to include the main objectives of the reduction policies and measures into the strategic documents, oriented toward national environmental, economic, energy and transportation policies. That will be our contribution toward the common goal of combating the risks of global warming.

Mr. President,

Discussions during the 4th Session of the Conference of Parties are basically focused on flexible mechanisms, which certainly will play an important role in the future to meet the commitments of Article 3.1 at less cost. Bearing in mind the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention and its Protocol, the Czech Republic believes, that the priority to reduce total emissions must be given to domestic actions. Other flexible mechanisms can play an important role to achieve our common targets only under the assumption, that the rules and modalities will cover principles of supplementation, environmental effectiveness, eligibility and compliance.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the 21st century approaches, we must gather the wisdom from all over the world in an effort to save the future of the global environment, which is a prerequisite for the existence of the life on the Earth. Therefore, I earnestly hope, that the Kyoto Protocol and its practices will successfully reach their desirable effect as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your attention.