

X

**10. SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES OF THE UNFCCC,
HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT**

BUENOS AIRES 15. – 17. 12.2004

**IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE, ADAPTATION AND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**

H.E. Mr. Jan-Erik Enestam, Minister for the Environment, Finland

As many speakers before me, I bring the alarming news from Arctic Climate Impact Assessment: the Arctic climate is now warming rapidly, and much larger changes are projected. The sea ice is decreasing, and many ecosystems and species are threatened or face extinction. The very basis of indigenous economies and cultural and social identities is being destroyed. Arctic people do not have to wait for the climate change to affect them, it already does!

The Arctic Region is not alone – all parts of the world must get prepared for the climate change and start developing adaptation actions. Finland is committed to supporting the developing countries in their efforts towards this goal. We consider this money wisely spent, as failing to take climate risks into account, might imperil the investments made to achieve **the Millenium Development Goals** and other sustainable development objectives.

At home we have just completed **the National Adaptation Strategy**. The first task was to get grips with the problem. We compiled all information available for Finland about climate scenarios and impact assessments. We used expert advice and organized public hearings to collect insights of various actors. And we launched new re-

search activities to get additional information and to ensure that our understanding will be further built up.

Our Adaptation Strategy now covers all key sectors: forestry, agriculture, industrial sectors, building and urban development, transport and waste management. The final goal is, of course, action. The key word here is **mainstreaming**, it is the integration of adaptation aspects into the policy planning in all relevant sectors. We found out that many new activities may not be required, but the challenge is rather to make various actors aware of climatic risks and to convince them to do, whatever they are already doing, differently taking the new risks into account.

The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment has forcefully demonstrated direct and indirect threats to our well-being. Furthermore, it shows clear feedback links from the Arctic climate change to the global climate system. For the Arctic people, and for so many other vulnerable communities around the world, the need to adapt to climate change will add yet another challenge to be faced. They need all our support in their struggle. At the same time the governments can only have one logical long-term response: our common effort for **mitigation is indeed the most important adaptation action**. Finland recognizes its responsibility and will do its share by meeting its Kyoto commitments.

Thank you for your attention.