

**FOURTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE  
CLIMATE CHANGE CONVENTION**  
**Buenos Aires, November, 1998**

**STATEMENT BY Mr. COSTAS THEMISTOCLEOUS, MINISTER OF  
AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT  
OF CYPRUS**

Mr. President,  
Dear Colleagues,

Within only a few years, global warming has been transformed from scientific speculation to an environmental threat of world-wide political concern.

The strong possibility for an enhanced man-made greenhouse effect in the coming decades has been debated by scientists and politicians in every nation, and it has been established as a problem of international dimension.

This is obvious by the fact that, almost all countries, have gathered to this city, with the aim to reach decisions on combating climate change and the greenhouse effect.

Cyprus approaches the climate change issue with no reservations, as we heavily rely on fossil fuel imports and we are a small coastal entity. Thus, the country is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. For example, recent extreme weather events, that is a heat wave and a prolonged drought, have had the sad repercussions of causing a number of deaths and the unwanted result of raising energy consumption and forcing us into desalination, as a crisis management measure.

Accepting its global responsibilities on the climate change issue, Cyprus became a party to the Climate Change Convention early in 1998, and we have already embarked upon a number of actions in order to reduce the rate of increase of our greenhouse gases emissions.

Among others, a strategic Energy Plan is under preparation, the Energy Charter Treaty and the Energy Charter Protocol on Energy Efficiency have been ratified and the Energy Efficiency Initiative has been signed.

As regards the provisions and commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, we are of the opinion that our basic considerations should be to reach consensus on a system effective enough to strategically mediate between differing viewpoints and assist in the clearer definition of the roles of every sector. Success will depend on whether we will be able to create conditions of equitable terms of exchange and establish effective linkages between the various options.

At this historical moment, Cyprus, being a candidate country for membership to the European Union, fully supports the initiatives taken by the European Commission and the efforts it has undertaken to enhance the response needed for the reduction of the emission of greenhouse gases.

On our part, the Council of Ministers has decided last week that we should proceed with signing the Kyoto Protocol and with its ratification at an appropriate time.

Dear Colleagues,

I conclude with the expression of the strong hope that, in this meeting, we will exercise all our political will and commitment in order to secure a better future for our children.

Thank you Mr. President.