



ITALY

STATEMENT BY
H.E. SENATOR EDO RONCHI
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
OF ITALY

TO THE 5TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

BONN, NOVEMBER 2, 1999

Mr President, Excellencies, Members of the Delegations,

May I first congratulate the Government of Germany on hosting the fifth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in beautiful Bonn and thank the German people for the very warm welcome and extremely kind hospitality.

Minister Hassi of Finland took the floor this afternoon on behalf of the European Union. Italy fully supports her statement.

Mr. President,

Two years have elapsed since in Kyoto we agreed on a historic Protocol that marked the beginning of our joint efforts to fight climate change.

But while we are debating the best ways to undertake this fight, the state of the environment keeps deteriorating. It does not wait for the end of our negotiations. It does not pause in the hope that our remedial action will be coming soon.

Italy has repeatedly voiced its concern over the immense damage that human kind is inflicting on our planet. We relentlessly endanger human lives, important lands, beautiful towns, seas, coastlines and landscapes.

As Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote, everything is perfect in the hands of the Creator; everything degenerates in the hands of man.

Today, as two years ago, we are called to confront tragedies of global dimensions brought about by climate change. We must listen to the outcry that comes from all over the earth and do our utmost best to prevent these natural disasters that are compounded by human error.

Mr President,

In Kyoto we came to negotiate an agreement aimed at avoiding to impose an unbearable legacy to the generation to come.

Here we all must pledge to successfully co-operate in a common and concerted effort to implement the Kyoto Protocol. Let us take bold decisions and pass from words to hard facts once and for all. The Protocol should enter into force the soonest possible, anyway no later than the year 2002. This way we shall transform into reality the hopes voiced at the Earth Summit in Rio ten years before.

The overriding priority that must guide our action should be our commitment to reach the Kyoto targets.

To this end, we must be ready to invest in new technologies, energy efficiency and renewable energies. And I wish to stress that nuclear power should not be eligible under the Kyoto Mechanisms. We must blaze the trail to a new industrial revolution that will lead us all towards the safe haven of an environmentally sound new world, of a sustainable future.

Adequate consideration should also be paid to the possibility of establishing a Multilateral Fund in the framework of the implementation of the Clean Development Mechanism. Taking into account the successful outcome of the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol, this Fund should be supplemental to private sources and aimed at fostering Clean Development Mechanism projects.

At national level we must strive to adopt those policies and measures that we shall be bound to implement once we will have ratified the Kyoto Protocol.

There is actually no substantial reason to postpone today what we shall be obliged to do tomorrow.

Mr President,

We must focus our mind on concrete goals that we may be able to reach a short time from now.

This is exactly what we did in Italy. In December 1998 the Italian Parliament approved a Carbon Tax aimed at:

- reducing the consumption of energy products with high percentage of carbon, thus improving energy efficiency;
- fostering the use of renewable energy sources;
- using the larger tax revenues to cut labour costs, thus creating new employment without increasing the total fiscal burden.

It is estimated that by the year 2005, when the Carbon Tax will be fully implemented, the emission of Co₂ will be reduced by 12 million tonnes per year. This amounts to almost one third of the reduction set forth for the year 2005 in the decision adopted in November 1998 by the Italian Government aimed at the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.

But I also took the floor this afternoon to ask for your solidarity. The Italian Carbon Tax will be subject to a parliamentary review next year, also in the light of similar measures adopted by other countries, which signed the Kyoto Protocol.

The success story of the Italian Carbon Tax should not be abruptly ended. In Italy we have acted upon the Kyoto principles. Do lend us your co-operation.