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Statement by Ms Guro Fjellanger, environment minister of Norway

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world needs an ambitious and effective agreement which makes a difference to the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. That is what we owe our children, and that is why we went down the long road leading to Kyoto. We also owe our children to do this right, so we can enjoy an economic development, which is sustainable for all Parties and future generations.

We agreed in Rio that developed countries must take the lead, and here we should agree on an overall reduction target for the emission of all greenhouse gases, including sinks, of 10-15% for Annex I Parties. Later we should take further steps. To arrive at the highest possible level of ambition, we need to distribute the individual Parties' commitments in a way that is perceived as fair. It must imply equitable burdens on the participants and represent an effective incentive for all Annex I Parties to take policies and measures to reduce emissions and enhance sinks.

Basic principles for distribution of commitments were laid down in Rio, reaffirmed and further specified in the Berlin-mandate. We need to reflect differences in starting points, economic structures and resource bases. Norway is disappointed that it has been so hard to build these principles into an agreeable text to be adopted here in Kyoto.

To illustrate using the simplest indicator - population growth between 1990 and 2010: how can it be fair to give the same QELRO to a country with 25-30 per cent growth as to one with 10 per cent decline, which is an expected interval among our countries? And how can the protocol be insensitive to the fact that some countries already have most of their energy supplies from renewable energy sources, while others have huge reduction potentials in old, inefficient coal-fired power plants? - Or be insensitive to the fact that the population in some countries drive twice as much in twice as big cars as in other countries? And how can we neglect to reflect different levels of economic development in our agreement? The EU has taken due account to such factors when they have distributed their target internally, and the result seems to us a much bigger reduction than would otherwise have been possible.

It seems that countries are realising that a flat rate approach fails both regarding fairness and effectiveness and would make an ambitious agreement impossible. Still, there is a long way from the present general understanding to a systematic approach. However, Norway is ready to accept its fair share under the differentiated approach, which seems politically possible here in Kyoto.

Mr. President, we need to avoid loopholes in this protocol. I wonder how we could explain to our children an outcome that leave some gases to grow uncontrolled, if this is indeed the result. The atmosphere also sees emissions and removals from the land use change and forestry sector. We need to include these now in a clear way, to give the right signals to protect the reservoirs and enhance the sinks. Otherwise I'm afraid we may create another

loophole. The uncertainty here is not a bigger problem than for other sectors, and it is not an excuse to postpone important decisions for the environment. Norway may accept a stricter QELRO with six gases and sinks included.

We need to take demonstrable actions at home. The national communications and reviews under the convention prove that implementation of policies and measures are under way. Still we need to do more - much more.

To get an ambitious agreement, we also need flexible means of implementation. We cannot afford the luxury of wasting money, given the size of the task. We need to agree on the use of means such as joint implementation and emission trading here in Kyoto, and improve on the technical and practical details in the light of acquired experience. But allowing for such flexibility should not give any country an excuse for not taking action at home.

The result we will achieve here will only be one step towards fulfilling the ultimate objective of the convention. Based on the effective implementation of the first steps taken here in Kyoto, there is a need in the longer run to take into account all Parties, reflecting our common, but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. To combine this with a sustainable economic development and poverty eradication is a necessary task, and we do need to be more sophisticated than under the present agreement for Annex I countries. We should seriously start addressing this in an equitable way. That would benefit those who may suffer from climate change, most of them living in developing countries.

In this perspective, we see it as important that all countries have access to the most efficient technology and are able to use it. All countries also have to intensify their education, training and awareness programs. We, as an Annex II Party, recognise our commitments to provide financial resources under various paragraphs in the existing convention, and will continue to do so.

We have many things to resolve and just a few hours left. Flexibility and good will is needed too arrive at a result we can defend to our children, but I sense that there is a will, and that we can make it here in this beautiful city of Kyoto!

Thank you, Mr president