

**Fourth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on
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Statement by

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Madame President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first convey my Government's thanks for your excellent hospitality during this Conference in the very charming and interesting city of Buenos Aires.

Greece is a country that is blessed in a number of ways. Its most important blessing has been and remains its climate. It is this climate with its sublime light and temperate conditions that has nurtured Greece's philosophers, scientists, artists and poets over the centuries and inspired them to produce fruit that has been of benefit to all mankind. It is this climate that still attracts visitors from all over the world. And it is this climate that we are determined to safeguard for the future generations.

It is very clear to us that to safeguard this climate of our country, we must safeguard the climate of our planet. In climate, there is no possible means of isolation or of insulation. We are all interrelated and thus affected by each other's actions.

It is equally clear to us that human activity is affecting the climate in an adverse way. The historic agreement in Kyoto was brought about by the recognition of these facts.

The recent disaster caused by the extreme weather storm in Central America, for which let me express my Government's sincere condolences, have brought, in a timely albeit very painful fashion to our attention, the perils that we may face if climatic change is not checked.

Although Greece does not face the extreme and immediate dangers that other countries in Africa and the Pacific face from climatic change, it too is starting to detect areas under tangible and immediate threat. Signs of land deterioration are evident in its islands. Water resources are starting to feel the pressures of demand and periodic droughts. Flooding from local severe storms has been causing damage and even loss of life. Sensitive wetlands are threatened.

In recognition of this and in the scope of its particular circumstances, Greece has been engaged in an intense effort to constrain its emissions. These circumstances include a relatively low per capita rate of energy use and in particular electricity consumption, a lack of any indigenous energy source except lignite, a lack of energy intensive industry, and a need for additional development, infrastructure improvement and economic growth. Our target in the first commitment period, albeit calling for an increase in overall emissions, represents a 18% to 45% reduction from emission level estimates that would result if additional measures in all sectors, and especially energy supply and use, are not put in place.

In this respect, we have already set a number of priorities and implemented a number of policies to reach our target. These include the increased use of energy sources such as natural gas that result in lower greenhouse gas emissions, the utilization of all available hydropower, the doubling of wind energy production, and the most intense use of solar collectors in Europe. A special effort has been made to increase energy conservation by strengthening building code insulation requirements and by providing incentives for actions in industry to save energy.

The effort to further curtail emissions will be intensified in the future. In this respect, substantial benefits are expected from the enhancement of existing measures and the initiation of new ones. These measures will ensure increased energy conservation in the domestic and transport sectors as well as the accelerated utilization of renewable energy sources such as wind and solar, which fortunately are generously available in Greece.

Recognizing the need for wide involvement and exchange of information and know-how to address climate change, Greece has organized and hosted a number of regional workshops, including a recent one at the town of Metsovo in Northern Greece this past September. These workshops focused on Mediterranean climatic conditions and associated problems, and the identification of possible common actions with other neighboring countries. Our extended interactions with these countries include technical exchanges and assistance on a number of relevant issues that include renewable resource assessment and technology, rational use of energy, and planning. We plan on continuing and extending these joint activities, which we see as fundamental to addressing the climate issue.

In Kyoto developed parties agreed to take on, individually or jointly, ambitious legally binding targets. It is becoming obvious that to meet these targets, a strong effort will be required.

To engage in this effort and to map out cost effective national, as well as common or coordinated policies and actions, all possibilities included in the Kyoto protocol need to be fleshed out. Especially as regards the flexible mechanisms, we need to agree on clear principles, modalities, guidelines and rules including ceilings on their use. In view of the often conflicting variety of priorities assigned by parties to these mechanisms, we believe that they should be developed together. We further believe, along with our colleagues in the European Union, that the reductions achieved via the use of these mechanisms can only be supplemental to reductions resulting from domestic actions.

The task of developing these mechanisms and of agreeing on their multifaceted and often interlinked elements is difficult, unglamorous, often technical and sometimes misunderstood. It is also vital in bringing forward this Kyoto Protocol process and a necessary condition for evolving further cost effective strategies to address the danger of climate change. These strategies need to address the legitimate needs for sustainable development of a large number of parties and the ultimate target of the emission convergence and stabilization.

It is for this fundamental reason that we should try here in Buenos Aires to agree on concrete directions, paths and milestones to reach our common goals.

Thank you for your kind attention.