

Check against delivery!

**Statement made by H. E. Mr. Kjell Larsson
Minister of the Environment, Sweden**

COP4, Buenos Aires November 12 1998

Mr/Madame President,

I would like to start by strongly supporting what my Austrian Colleague has elaborated on the EU position.

My government sees the mitigation of global warming as an important part of our commitment to sustainability, in ecological as well as economic and social terms. Fundamental changes will be necessary during the coming decades in order to meet the commitments under the Convention.

Listening to the debates at this conference, you might get the impression that technical and bureaucratic details are in the centre. But let us focus on what is really important: how to reduce emissions.

This task will not be possible unless we exert ourselves to increase awareness and knowledge among citizens in our countries in order to create understanding and support for the difficult decisions ahead. More and more people accept that global policies to mitigate climate change are necessary and unavoidable. But there is still a lack of awareness of the risks of climate change

and also a lot of scepticism and questioning: is this policy really necessary, what does it cost, will it affect my daily life in a negative way, will it affect my job and the economy?

What we have to show is that mitigating climate change is possible and that it even contains the prospect of creating growth and jobs.

Furthermore, we need to create understandable rules and equitable sharing of burdens to get the necessary public support. We must avoid to create the impression that we are only discussing bureaucratic details and technical means.

Mr/Madame President,

The Kyoto agreement will be fully operative only when precise agreements on a number of issues have been reached.

The flexible mechanisms are only instruments. They do not replace action and they are not an end in themselves. They are vehicles for transferring climate mitigation effects of actions between Parties.

But let us not underestimate the complexities. The flexible mechanisms require a regulatory framework, striking the right balance between politics and markets.

In the longer term countries outside Annex I will have to take on limitation commitments. But here and now, focus must be on the commitments of the

developed nations. Having in mind that industrialised countries are responsible for the major part of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, I believe we should be moderate when speaking about obligations of the developing nations. Their right to economic development and a higher standard of living must not be prevented by the industrialised world's unsustainable levels of emissions.

The commitments towards those countries that are most vulnerable to climate change lie on all Parties. From our side we stand ready to support the least developed countries to participate in a strengthened dialogue, for example by contributing to a workshop to identify urgent actions.

We believe that the CDM could develop into an innovative and efficient instrument for co-operation between the south and the north. Again, the necessary rules have to be developed.

Mr/Madame President, we believe that the recent climatic disasters illustrate that concrete results must be reached at this meeting. We have to continue this important and difficult process in a sense of urgency.

The programme that must emerge from Buenos Aires, with detailed terms of reference and firm timetables, will strengthen the signal from Kyoto. We are all involved in a joint effort to show that global threats can indeed trigger off action on a global scale.

Thank you, Mr/Madame President.