

**Speech by Mr. Noel Dempsey, T.D., Minister for the Environment and Local  
Government**

**IRELAND**

**6<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate  
Change**

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Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates.

COP6 is a crossroads in our efforts to tackle climate change.

- The evidence for human impacts on global climate systems is now compelling.
- The profound consequences of climate change are intensifying all the time, with a disproportionate impact on the developing world.
- We have to face up to the challenging but essential task of reducing overall emissions under the Kyoto Protocol.

It is time to agree on the elements which are critical to enable sufficient Parties to ratify the Protocol so that it enters into force by 2002. In doing so, we must protect its environmental integrity. And we must create the foundations which will allow more challenging emissions reduction targets to be adopted for future commitment periods.

We have had 3 years of intensive negotiations since we agreed the Protocol. It is now the responsibility of Ministers in this final week in the Hague to ensure a successful, balanced outcome. This depends on agreement on a number of key issues.

- Domestic action must be our main means of meeting our targets under the Protocol.
- Environmentally responsive, economically efficient and transparent flexible mechanisms must be established.
- A robust compliance regime with real consequences for non-compliance should underpin our commitments.
- We must not damage the environmental integrity of the Protocol through the use of sinks in the CDM, offsetting the need for overall emissions reductions under the Protocol.
- Our most important and far-reaching international instrument to protect the environment should not be used to promote nuclear power.

Developing countries' concerns, especially those of Least Developed Countries, must be addressed. For many years now, Ireland has placed the least developed countries at the centre of our overseas development programme. We are committed to a very substantial increase in overseas development aid and intend to reinforce our emphasis on least developed countries within this framework.

Sustainable development is a fundamental requirement of the CDM. In financially supporting developing countries, our concerns are to make our funding as immediate, as operational and as responsive as possible to the real needs identified by these countries.

If we are to meet the challenge of climate change, business as usual is not an option nationally or internationally. My Government has in the last few weeks published its National Climate Change Strategy to meet our Kyoto target, and this will require intensive but equitable action across all economic sectors and wide support by society.

We are determined, both domestically and as part of the international community, to act decisively. Here in The Hague we must create the right conditions to ratify the Protocol and build strong foundations for future action.