

Statement
by Jürgen Trittin,
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on the occasion of the
Sixth Conference of the Parties
to the United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate Change
The Hague, 21 November 2000

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Act now - The Hague must be a success

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate change is the most important environmental problem facing humankind today. According to the most recent IPCC report, climate change is occurring more rapidly and drastically than previously assumed.

The world is watching us. This week we have to make decisions which will make ratification of the Kyoto Protocol feasible. The Protocol must go into force by 2002 – 10 years after Rio de Janeiro.

But it must be an Environmental Protection Protocol which earns its name as such. The Hague should not water down the Kyoto Protocol and must lead to concrete emission reductions! Kyoto set the goal clearly – 5.2% reduction during the commitment period of 2008 to 2012. We cannot renegotiate Kyoto!

Germany has taken climate protection to heart, already today having reduced greenhouse gas emissions by more than 18%.

Since October 18, 2000 we have had a National Climate Protection Program. Through this program we intend to reduce our CO₂ emissions to 25% of 1990 levels by 2005. As a result, we are giving the economy important impulses for change. Our building renovation program for existing buildings alone will bring an additional 10 billion DM to the construction sector. The new Climate Protection Program will lead to investments of hundreds of billions of DM. With this program we are meeting the global climate challenge by transforming Germany into a sustainable society.

We have to address a number of key issues:

- The Hague must ensure that industrialized countries take domestic action to reduce emissions. The Kyoto Mechanisms should be used. But we must take the Kyoto issue of "supplementarity" seriously. I insist on the necessity of a quantified emissions ceiling. Allow me to point out that the EU proposal is not rigid. Under the "however clause" of the current EU proposal, country-specific emissions scenarios as well as Kyoto domestic action requirements taken together will become the benchmark for reductions which can be achieved abroad. This offers exceptional flexibility, allowing a huge number of CDM and JI projects as well as emissions trading, and at the same time protects the integrity of the Kyoto Protocol.

- The Hague must decide on acceptable rules for sinks. One must be cautious on the sinks issue. Sinks do not lead to reductions. Sinks are only ways of shifting reductions to our children and grandchildren. The storage functions of sinks are completely uncertain, above all the functions of agricultural areas. By 2050 at the latest these sinks will become sources of carbon dioxide. Many countries in the North and South share this view.
- The Hague must bring about a thorough and rigorous compliance regime. The Kyoto Protocol and its flexible mechanisms are uncharted territory. We are creating a huge market. Effective climate protection requires stringent rules.

The industrialized world must take on a leadership role in the Hague. Business-as-usual would be disastrous for the environment and a mistake in terms of the economy. In Germany, climate protection means many opportunities for companies which offer environmentally friendly products and services. The growth potential in these sectors is much greater than the industrial average. Climate protection means innovation, the modernization of industrial society, exciting chances for competing in the world market and the creation of new jobs.

- Last but not least, The Hague must intensify the cooperation between the industrialized world and developing countries. Climate protection is in the interest of all countries, in particular developing countries. We want to build on our existing cooperation with these countries. Central areas of action include capacity-building and the provision of support to developing countries so they can be better prepared for facing the consequences of climate change. A substantial third replenishment of the GEF is critical for implementing resolutions from The Hague. Germany is prepared to be an active contributor. It is our goal to expand our commitments on climate protection issues – particularly renewable energy and tropical forests – and to keep these commitments at a high level.

The following are examples of German efforts already made:

- Since 1992 we have made available over three billion DM to developing countries for climate protection,
- Of this, over 1,2 billion DM were used for renewable energy projects.
- Since the GEF was founded, Germany has provided around 1,2 billion US \$ for the purposes of climate protection.
- In the future, contributions from Germany of approximately 500 million DM can be expected.

Public investment in the North and South will not be enough to meet the needs for action. We need to engage the private sector. We should do everything possible to ensure that the Clean Development Mechanism becomes an effective way to facilitate the transfer of capital and technology to developing countries. Already today we are assisting Morocco, Indonesia, and Chile prepare for working with the private sector on CDM projects. A prompt start for CDM is absolutely necessary if we want to intensify our support of developing countries in their efforts to implement adaptation measures against climate change.

What we cannot afford to do is continually look for a scapegoat. Don't put off to tomorrow what we can do today. Negotiate! And, dear colleagues, take action at home!

I expect that under the professional leadership of Jan Pronk in The Hague we will rise to the occasion.

The fight against the greenhouse effect cannot be delayed.