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PANEL NO. 4 : MITIGATION OF CLIMATE CHANGE – POLICIES AND  
THEIR IMPACTS

1. The invitation to take part in this panel is a great honour for me. This is also an important challenge, as current exchange of views and opinion, all those hot discussions on global climate changes should lead us finally toward a better understanding of the role and impact of climate change mitigation policies. This is extremely important issue for both, developing and developed countries. Therefore, I should like to thank the hosts of the Conference for the opportunity to present Poland's views.
2. I hope that our discussion will help us identify and indicate the best opportunities for further co-operation among countries involved in the processes of climate change mitigation. In my opinion, the only promising strategy is to join our efforts and to harmonise implementation of the mitigation policies, respecting the principles of sustainable development and the right of all the people to fulfil their justified needs. Therefore, instruments for implementation of those policies should be designed in the manner assuring the aims and objectives will be achieved without slowing down the growth of the economies. Undisturbed and sustainable economic growth is at present - for my country, and I believe for the others - the necessary condition for the successful mitigation of climate change, but also for alleviation of many others problems, including poverty, unemployment as well as lack of economic and social cohesion.
3. Discussing possible impacts of different policies, we have to consider their potential costs and benefits which strongly depend on the timeframes and instruments applied. Therefore we have to learn how to estimate the social and economic impacts of mitigation policies, including also the benefits and

especially the losses which we can expect when such policies are not adopted. Integrated approach, allowing accurate evaluation of their impacts on all pillars of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental, is crucial.

4. It is a big challenge to carry out impartial and comprehensive assessment. Regarding, that the results of such assessment affect strongly decision-making processes and measures taken of by countries, regions and at the global level, the assessments methodology should assure that local conditions and different possible path of development of particular areas are taken into account. We should also recognise more deeply the conditions and factors affecting the development of policies themselves as well as their implementation, and also existing and potential barriers and the ways of their elimination or overcoming.
5. Previous discussions have shown many concerns of developing countries, particularly those dependent on exports and imports of oil, gas, coal and energy. This is readily understandable but can form also important barriers for wider implementation of more effective mitigation policies. Therefore, we should consider together how developing countries may be involved in the climate change mitigation process so that it could become one of the basic incentives supporting their economic growth, rather than be another barrier to their development.
6. For many countries, being at present important sources of greenhouse gases emission, poverty alleviation, access to energy and clean water or even the meeting of basic needs for survival are still the unquestioned priorities. Than the crucial question is: how can we ensure the sustainability of socio-economic development while respecting natural resources?
7. Some examples of effective solutions can be found in my country - Poland. During last 15 years we have been transforming our economy. Until late 80s the environment was not an issue for economic policies in Poland. This resulted in high level of air and water pollution, low energy efficiency and high consumption of raw materials.
8. Structural changes in early 90s towards fully market oriented economy have been supported by the comprehensive environmental policy, law and economic incentives and instruments. The process of changes was painful and expensive.

That time many state-owned companies were not able to adapt to new requirements and the social conditions of the society decreased dramatically in the beginning of the transformation process. But presently, as a result of this strategy implementation, our economy is healthy and growing fast.

9. The good example to illustrate the positive results is changes in CO2 emission level. Despite the significant growth of the GDP during last 10 years, which exceeds now by 50% the level of GDP of 1988, the energy consumption and CO2 emission levels significantly decreased and since mid 90-ties remained stable, about 30% below the base year. It proves that the economic development without continuously growing greenhouse gas emissions is possible. The lessons we have learnt during this complicated process of transformation may be considered as an example for many developing countries. We are ready to share our experience with others.
10. The same concerns and worries as we heard in Poland that time, are being discussed now regarding climate change mitigation measures. However, having a look from a perspective of last 15 years I am glad to say that we had made a good choice. Our obligation to adapt to the highest environmental standards following the EU ambitious regulations have become, and still is, a significant and difficult challenge, but at the same time became a booster for our economy, in particular for private sector and the investments. Higher environmental standards and implementation of sustainable development principles in sectoral policies did not have negative impacts on our economy. In contrary, they became a driving force in increasing the competitiveness of our economy and companies.
11. Poland's example can confirm that 'climate change mitigation' priorities are achievable if adopted by both the environmental and economic policies. It is relevant for 'economies in transition' like Poland or Russia and many others, but can also be relevant for those developing countries which are on the way to fast economic growth.
12. It is high time that common mitigation measures be taken by all countries which have significant contribution to global emission. The measures which would be an efficient instrument to halt the present growth in global emissions, and which

would, at the same time, help minimise an adverse effect of mitigation policies on developing countries.

13. Another key issue is to ensure the participation of the private sector in such a way that climate mitigation policies can become a positive driver for investments, innovative change and technology diffusion, rather than be considered as an additional legal and administrative restrictions imposed on development and competitiveness.

14. In conclusion, I would like to underline that once again we face important challenge – how to overcome the entrenched idea that “environmentally cleaner” means “more expensive”? Must the economies of our countries incur higher costs in their pursuit of sustainable development by using cleaner technologies instead of continuing the ‘traditional’ development pathways? Of course, not. Mitigation policies do not need to be a barrier for the private sector, business and industry. Mitigation policies must not be a burden for neither developed, nor developing countries. Contrary, the policies which introduce *inter alia* high environmental and technological standards can be a booster for faster and sustainable economic development, along with the transfer of innovative technologies, including renewables. They can and should become a permanent, long-term instrument inducing investments and facilitating the dissemination and transfer of ‘environmentally sound technologies’. This is the only solution for devising further effective strategies and measures. This needs engagement of all the Parties<sup>1</sup> in open-mind discussion on next steps to avoid climate change treats.

Thank you very much for your attention.