

Statement by H.E. Minister Miklós Persányi
President of the Conference of the Parties at its ninth session

at the reception hosted by the Mayor of Bonn and BMU
on occasion of the opening of the twentieth sessions
of the subsidiary bodies of the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC
Bonn, 16 June 2004

This year we commemorate the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Adoption of the Convention in 1992 was the result of complex negotiations from the beginning of 1991; they were complex because of the far-reaching consequences of the required measures for controlling greenhouse gas emissions and the hazardous impacts of the anticipated climate change.

This international agreement could not be reached without the comprehensive monitoring and research activities on the behaviour of our global environment and the ever-deepening dialogue between the scientific and the policy-making communities that started long before.

The Convention became a manifestation of the acknowledgement of the global hazard caused by ourselves, but it has offered only a general framework for future policy directions. It was assumed that concrete actions should and will be agreed afterwards, based on improved scientific evidence, advice from the research and technological community and further constructive international political debate.

We should acknowledge with satisfaction the important progress made since the birth of the Convention in terms of research activities, formulation of relevant national and sector-oriented programmes, national reporting and technology innovations.

But we should also admit that we have still collectively – albeit with different responsibilities – failed to find and implement effective steps to face the emerging hazard of global climate change, in particular to lessen the increasing global emissions and growing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases.

As a first step, the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 1997, but it has not yet entered into force. Actually, besides the quantified emission-controlling commitments by the developed countries, the Protocol contains many potentially useful supplementary instruments with their detailed rules of operation as agreed upon in the Marrakesh Accords.

As you all know well, already more than 120 countries have ratified or acceded to the Protocol and are eager to implement it and use those instruments, including the so-called Kyoto mechanisms.

I was elected as the President of the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties at Milan last year and I committed myself to do my best: to rebuild the confidence between the various country groups, to facilitate constructive policy dialogue on the implementation of the Convention, and to come to an agreement on various building blocks.

The ninth session proved again that we can efficiently collaborate: there, together, we solved a series of important problems and adopted significant decisions.

The tenth anniversary of the Convention is a good occasion to have a critical appraisal and to prepare ourselves for a new start to serious negotiations on the necessary and possible actions for the forthcoming decades – in order to halt the rapidly increasing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases.

I hope that these goals will also guide you during your deliberations here in Bonn at the sessions of the subsidiary bodies, and during the preparations for the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

With these ideas I wish you a good working atmosphere for the session and successful outcomes – with a clear understanding of the common responsibilities for the future of our global environment and for the well-being of present and future generations of mankind.

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