

SWEDEN



Statement by

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Combating climate change is probably the greatest undertaking confronting mankind during this century. The regions of the world facing the greatest development challenges are those that will be affected most. The most underprivileged are the most vulnerable. Therefore, the time for global solidarity is now.

We must fulfil the Millennium Development Goals. This can only be achieved if our actions related to energy, industrial development and protection of the atmosphere are consistent with the global objective of addressing climate change and other environmental threats.

We must increase our joint efforts to reduce the emissions causing global warming. The latest IPCC report shows that we already have cost-effective ways to do this. I have only been Minister of the environment for 6 months, but I am concerned that we are facing a "prisoners dilemma" on the climate issues, where countries tend urge others to take the first step toward action. We must not just ask what other countries can do, but what we can do ourselves. We have the necessary tools and we have to take action now.

CSD can contribute to enhancing our efforts to address global warming, particularly with respect to energy. The IPCC report concludes that future lies in renewable energy sources and energy efficiency measures. Renewables have a potential far greater than nuclear power. Therefore, this is where our main focus should be. This way we can also ensure access to sustainable and affordable energy at the same time as we contribute to reducing harmful emissions into the atmosphere.

Mr Chairman,

Sweden has a longstanding engagement in favour of sustainable development of the developing countries, in particular the least developed ones. Since the first UN conference on environment in Stockholm 1972 we have underlined the strong link between safeguarding the environment and achieving sustainable development. We have set and achieved the 1 percent target of GNI (Growth National Income) as ODA (Official Development Assistance)

Sweden is among the countries that have clearly shown that economic growth is fully consistent with decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. Since 1990 our GNP has grown 35 %. At the same time our CO₂-emissions decreased 7 %. Increased energy efficiency and use of renewable energy have played a major role in our "decoupling". Sweden will continue to play a significant role in the international efforts to promote sustainable development and combat climate change. The climate negotiations will be at a decisive stage in 2009 and we must find a solution. We will make our utmost to contribute to a successful outcome.

Mr Chairman,

CSD contributes to integrating key cross-cutting areas when addressing major issues. One example is gender equality which is a precondition for sustainable development.

Another is the need for sustainable patterns of consumption and production, which is crucial to address climate change and to achieve a sustainable development.

Sweden has taken a lead role in the Task Force for Sustainable Lifestyles within the Marrakesh process. We will also host the International Expert Meeting on sustainable production and consumption in June this year. We look forward to broad and engaged participation. Mr Chairman,

It is now 20 years since the Bruntland report was presented, and we are very honoured that Mrs Bruntland is here with us today. The report stressed many of the issues that are on the agenda today. And the challenge of achieving sustainable development is as urgent today as in 1987.

It is my hope that the outcome of this CSD will provide strong, relevant and focused policy recommendations to help addressing the main issues of this year's meeting, thereby leading us further on the way to sustainable development.

Thank you, Mr Chairman