

Communiqué

G8 Environment Ministers' Meeting in Trieste, 2-4 March 2001

1. We, the Environment Ministers of the eight major industrialized countries and the European Commissioner responsible for the Environment, have met from 2 to 4 March 2001 in Trieste, Italy as a follow up to our last meeting in Otsu, Japan in 2000 to discuss challenging environmental issues. Discussions centred on three key themes: I. Climate Change; II. Sustainable Development towards Johannesburg 2002; III. Environment and Health. We call upon the chair to forward this communiqué to the chair of the Genoa Summit of Heads of State and Government.

Introduction

2. As this new millennium begins, we must take stock of the range of complex global environmental challenges to be addressed to achieve sustainable development which must be met with short and long-term actions. We share the strong concerns about the environmental threats for our planet. We must exercise vigorously our leadership to counter these threats and to live up to our responsibilities.

I. Climate Change

A. Promoting timely global action to meet the challenges of climate change

3. "Emissions of greenhouse gases and aerosols due to human activities continue to alter the atmosphere in ways that are expected to affect the climate.

There is new and stronger evidence that most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities.

The globally averaged surface temperature is projected to increase by 1,4 to 5,8°C over the period 1990 to 2100. The projected rate of warming is much larger than the observed changes during the 20th century." (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change-IPCC, WG I, Third Assessment Report – January 2001).

4. "Scientific studies show that human health, ecological systems, and socio-economic sectors (e.g. hydrology and water resources, food and fiber production, coastal systems, and human settlements), all of which are vital to sustainable development, are sensitive to changes in climate – including both the magnitude and rate of climate changes – as well as to changes in climate variability." (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change-IPCC, Special Report, Regional Impacts of Climate Change: An Assessment of Vulnerability)

5. We express our concern about the seriousness of the situation according to the findings of the IPCC report. We commit ourselves at the resumed COP6 to strive to reach agreement on outstanding political issues and to ensure in a cost-effective manner the environmental integrity of the Kyoto Protocol, making full use of all opportunities, including ministerial meetings. A successful outcome at COP 6-bis is necessary to allow early entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. For most countries this means no later than 2002, with timely ratification processes.

6. We recognize the importance of continuing consultations on issues such as sinks and the Kyoto Mechanisms and compliance, to lay the basis for decisions at the resumed COP 6.

We agree that efficient, transparent and clear rules on the Kyoto Mechanisms are important to achieve the goals of the Kyoto Protocol and that a comprehensive and strong compliance system, supported by a reliable system of monitoring, reporting and review will facilitate compliance and discourage non-compliance.

7. Furthermore, we commit to take the lead by strengthening and implementing national programs and actions, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as to promote and disseminate environmentally sound technologies and practices and renewable energy sources.

In addition, we look forward to concrete recommendations from the G8 Renewable Energy Task Force established by the Heads of State and Government at the Okinawa Summit as stated in paragraph 66 of the Okinawa Communiqué.

8. Achieving the ultimate objective of the Convention will require much greater efforts in developed countries, and developing countries. We reaffirm our responsibilities to take the lead in combating climate

change. We also welcome those actions already being taken by developing countries and encourage them to strengthen their efforts in this field.

We recognise the importance of capacity building and technology transfer, as well as the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), in order to assist and support developing countries in addressing climate change.

9. We recognise the findings of the IPCC that some countries may be particularly vulnerable to adverse effects of climate change, namely small island developing states and least developed countries. We also acknowledge the need to continue supporting adaptation measures by those countries.

10. We recognise the importance of capacity building and technology transfer, as well as Joint Implementation, in order to assist and support countries with economies in transition in addressing climate change.

B. Strengthening domestic actions

11. All G8 countries have already begun and commit themselves to take strong domestic actions to tackle global climate change. We note the benefit of showing demonstrable progress in the years ahead. G8 countries will submit transparent and accountable information on domestic actions as required by the Climate Change Convention.

We confirm that the use of the Kyoto mechanisms will be supplemental to domestic actions.

12. We recognise that a firm consensus for action on climate change is needed and that all sectors of society must be called upon to play their part in implementing change. Addressing social and employment issues is a matter of fundamental importance to promoting consensus.

13. Using the opportunities and advantages of the market and sending the right signals to the market are important for effectively addressing climate change. G8 countries are introducing measures that may include market mechanisms and will promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. We applaud the many private companies, civic groups, and individuals that are working to reduce their emissions. We congratulate, for example, businesses that have adopted voluntary programs, including innovative market-oriented approaches. These efforts demonstrate that the private sector, through the development of new technologies and the adoption of energy-efficient practices, can play a central role in meeting the challenge of climate change. We pledge to encourage and facilitate further voluntary actions by civil society now and to exchange information about how we can develop more effective public-private partnerships.

II. Sustainable Development towards Johannesburg 2002

Preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002

14. G8 Environment Ministers appreciate the decision of the UN General Assembly A55/199 accepting the offer of the Republic of South Africa to host the World Summit, and recommending attendance by Heads of State and Government.

15. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development presents a special opportunity to review past progress and to identify and anticipate new and emerging challenges that we will face in efforts to achieve sustainable development. We must find ways to ensure that globalisation promotes sustainable development to the benefit of all. Equally it will be essential to capture the benefits of technology for sustainable development.

16. The Summit should identify ways to promote better integration and coherence between the global development agenda, poverty eradication and global environment protection. We reaffirm the OECD Environmental International Development Target. The Summit should take forward looking action oriented decisions, particularly on sustainable energy and water. In this context, we look forward at the international conference on Freshwater (Bonn 3-7 December 2001) to contribute to the agenda setting in this field. Furthermore we would support the inclusion of health and environment as an element of the agenda for the Summit.

17. Recognizing that the majority of the world's population are now living in urban areas, we underscore the importance of promoting sustainable communities, including through local agenda 21's. We encourage the inclusion of these issues at the 2002 World Summit, and in this regard look forward to the outcomes of the

June 2001 special session of the UN General Assembly reviewing the implementation of the habitat agenda (sustainable human settlements).

18. We also emphasise the need to integrate environmental, social and economic policy making, including through the elaboration and formulation of national sustainable development strategies.

All countries should strive to mobilize their public and private domestic resources towards this end.

We reaffirm the crucial role of partnerships between countries, through the private sector, market based approaches, and through the mobilization of international resources.

We commit ourselves to assume leadership in changing unsustainable production and consumption patterns.

Measures identified must be backed by specific means of implementation.

19. We stress the need for early and effective preparations at all levels. We recognize that the engagement of civil society (citizens, non-governmental organisations, workers and business organizations, indigenous groups) will be critical to the success of Johannesburg Summit in 2002. Their involvement must be assured throughout the preparatory process as well as in implementing and monitoring its results.

20. The private sector has emerged as a global actor that has a significant impact on the environmental trends through its investment and technology decisions. A more active involvement by business in efforts to promote sustainable development, as well as a greater commitment to a new culture of environmental stewardship, should be pursued.

Environmental Governance, and integration of environmental policy into other sectorial policies

21. The strengthening of international environmental governance is important to meet the challenges of the 21st century and to implement multilateral environmental agreements. Effective, accountable governance not only helps to strengthen democracy and human rights, promote economic prosperity and social cohesion, and reduce poverty, but is critical to enhance environmental protection and the sustainable use of natural resources, and deepen confidence in government and public administration.

22. Furthermore, we underline that environmental considerations should be taken into account throughout the negotiations of the next WTO round with a view to achieving by the end of the round an overall outcome which respects global and regional environmental commitments and contributes to the advancement of sustainable development. The new round should maximise the potential for positive synergies between trade liberalization, environmental protection and economic and social development, including through the phasing out of environmentally harmful subsidies.

23. The approaching WSSD should serve as a catalyst to encourage innovative thinking, based on sound analysis and supported by political will and high-level engagement, on cost-effective measures to advance the coordination and implementation of existing legal and institutional mechanisms of international environmental governance. Within this context, we will strengthen our effort to ensure that globalization supports sustainable development.

24. We call on internationally operating enterprises to support the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the Global Compact Initiative of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to foster their realisation, thus promoting and protecting human rights, labour standards and the environment in their foreign direct investment. Relevant international institutions should examine which activities could further these goals.

25. We underline the need to improve UNEP's coordinating role in international environmental management and the need to foster voluntary exchanges of information between all international environmental institutions and bodies with a largely environmental remit, to provide coherence, in particular on a thematic basis, among schedules, assessments, reporting strategies and actions, mindful of autonomous nature of the separate treaties involved; improve existing structures of co-operation between Conventions and between their Secretariats, notably within thematic clusters; and reinforce the links between environmental and non environmental institutions increasing the participation of civil society.

26. We welcome the UNEP Governing Council Decision (Nairobi, February 5-9, 2001) to establish "an open-ended Intergovernmental Group to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weakness as well as future needs and options for strengthened international environmental governance, including the financing of UNEP". We commit to support the process and look forward to its results feeding into the preparation for the WSSD. The 10th session of the Commission on Sustainable

Development acting as the preparatory body for the World Summit should also address the issue in the broader context of multilateral efforts on sustainable development with the objective of enhancing policy coherence and implementation.

27. The strengthening of international environmental governance should be based on existing structures, in particular UNEP, with its headquarters in Nairobi, with a view to adapting them to new requirements.

28. Stable, predictable and adequate funding is a prerequisite for improving governance of international institutions. As regards UNEP, various methods could be contemplated to achieve this. All countries should be ready to play their part in the common effort.

29. We continue to recognize the serious environmental effects of violations of MEAs and the need to prevent them. We continue to support broad participation in, effective implementation of, and compliance with existing MEAs. Consideration should be given to ways of making them more effective, including by studying which compliance mechanisms would be most appropriate. We appreciate the ongoing activities by UNEP and the G8 Lyon Group Law Enforcement project on Environmental Crime, particularly concerning exchange of information and other cooperative efforts.

30. We note the general orientation of donors to contribute substantially to the third replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and recognize its vital role in improving and protecting the global environment as well as in the implementation of the Rio conventions and most recently the convention on persistent organic pollutants.

31. G8 Environment Ministers stress the importance of, and the need to promote, international, regional and global cooperation among states, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organisations, for the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its component. We endorse the concept of sustainable development in all economic, social and ecological areas of societal life and the concept of access to genetic resources and related "benefit sharing" on the basis of relevant international agreements.

32. The G8 countries stress the importance of capacity building to ensure biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. We encourage countries to improve policies, legislation, guidelines and fiscal and enforcement measures for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

33. The G8 countries also take note of the necessity to build support for strengthened action to ensure protection and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources and in this regard we look forward to an effective first intergovernmental review of the global programme of action for the protection of the marine environment, which is scheduled for November 2001 in Montreal, Canada.

Environmental Guidelines for Export Credit Agencies

34. Export Credit Agencies (ECAs), given their important function in supporting export trade and facilitating investment in economic development and infrastructure projects, can play a key leadership role in fostering sustainable development.

ECAs should therefore take necessary actions to ensure that environmentally negative impacts, both local and global, arising from the projects benefiting from their support are mitigated and minimized.

35. The potential of ECAs to contribute to sustainable development needs to be fostered through a strong and effective commitment of the international community to quickly develop and implement common binding environmental guidelines for ECAs' for encouraging strengthened integration of environmental consideration in investment decisions. These common guidelines should be based on the practices of other internationally recognized, publicly supported multilateral finance agencies such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank. ECAs should also adopt common measures to increase the transparency of their decision making process, including public access to environmental information, public consultation and consideration of relevant elements of the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams (WCD).

36. We therefore welcome and urge special effort to meet the commitment taken by the G8 Heads of State and Government in Cologne and Okinawa to develop common environmental guidelines for ECAs by the July, 2001 G8 Summit. We welcome the work carried out so far within the OECD towards common approaches on the environment and on officially supported export credits, look forward to the report on progress of the

OECD Export Credit Group (ECG) to the OECD Ministerial Council 2001, and call for increased and urgent attention to this issue to ensure its successful and rapid completion.

III. Environment and Health

37. The protection of human health and the prevention of environmental-related diseases are one of the fundamental objectives in our current and future environmental policy.

Our policies should be based on the precautionary approach, as set forth in principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, in order to reduce adverse impacts on the environment and to address risks on human health. We also recognize the need to promote actions aimed to an integration of environmental and health consideration into the other policies.

38. Water quality and ensuring the safety of drinking water and recreational water continues to be a challenge in many G8 countries and we must also work collectively to increase access to safe drinking water and sanitation in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition. The improvement of water quality and the increased access to safe drinking water and sanitation in these countries should be considered as priorities for the cooperation policies in environmental field. We commit to improve the research, data collection and information exchanges on environmental and health risk assessment connected with emissions of pollutants in the environmental media, with particular emphasis to freshwater. We confirm the provision contained in paragraph 13 of the Communiqué of the G8 Environment Ministers meeting of Otsu 2000 regarding the security from floods, droughts and other natural hazards.

39. The improvement of air quality, particularly in urban areas affected by increasing levels of smog, particulate matter and other forms of air pollution, continues to be an important environmental health challenge faced by G8 and many other countries. We commit to improve the collection, assessment, and dissemination of air quality data and to cooperate on risk assessment and science-based approaches that reduce emissions of major air pollutants and their transport across borders.

40. G8 Environment Ministers consider food safety to be of utmost importance. Maintenance of effective food safety systems and public confidence in them assumes critical importance in public policy.

41. We underline the importance of national and international environment and health agencies working together to address environmental health issues and note successes such as the policies arising from the 2nd European Conference on Environment and Health in Helsinki and the 3rd Conference in London in 1999. We also note with great pleasure that Health and Environment is a theme of the March 2001 Meeting of Environment Ministers of the Americas.

We recognize the need to strengthen the co-operation between national environment and health policy makers and to support the collaboration among sectoral international organizations such as UNEP, FAO and WHO, as well as the integration between international processes involving Health and Environment matters. We also recognize the promotion of partnership among governments, industries and other bodies and associations as a way to improve standards and to secure benefits to public health, with particular attention to the chemicals management.

42. We welcome the successful conclusion of the negotiations of of the Global Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants held in December 2000. We will increase our efforts in supporting the signature and the early entry into force of the Convention, as well as for reducing the health and environment impact caused by the use of these highly toxic chemicals. We are strongly committed to supporting and facilitating the implementation of the Convention by developing countries and countries with economies in transition through technical and financial assistance. We also commit ourselves to implement international projects aimed to improve our knowledge of the safe use of chemicals; the risks that can be involved in their manufacture, release into the environment and disposal; and the means to avoid or reduce risks. We are further committed to promoting internationally the development of national Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) schemes compatible among countries, which at a minimum have the characteristics identified in the Priorities for Action at Forum III of the IFCS and which include a core set of chemicals (i.e. POPs chemicals, heavy metals, ozone depleting chemicals), as a means to increase access to information and recognizing that communities have a right-to-know about chemicals in the environment.

43. We welcome the decisions of the UNEP Governing Council to initiate a global assessment of mercury and its compounds, and to examine the need for a strategic approach to chemicals management.

44. We reaffirm our commitment to ratify the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure (PIC) for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

Environmental health of children and other particularly vulnerable groups

45. Protecting the health of our children is a shared fundamental value. We recognize the special vulnerability of children to environmental threats and are committed to working together to do our utmost to remove those threats. We recognize that poverty and insufficient protection from environmental threats are often found in tandem. We will work together to address the most serious environmental health threats, including microbiological and chemical contaminants in drinking water, air pollution that exacerbates illness and death from asthma and other respiratory problems, polluted water, toxic substances and pesticides. We recall the attention of the G8 Members on the protection of the health of particularly vulnerable categories of people such as children, the elderly, pregnant women, and persons who are immunocompromised exposed to environmental-related health risks, indigenous people who rely directly on the natural environment for food and shelter, and of those populations affected by severe diseases related to the poverty.

46. We attach high importance to the Declaration of the Environment Leaders of the eight on Children's Environmental Health, 1997, and to "the special vulnerability of children and reproductive health to environmental threats" as contained in the WHO/UNECE Declaration of London on Environment and Health of June 1999 and in the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation Council Resolution on Children's Health and the Environment of June 2000.

47. We recommit ourselves to take initiative for a rapid implementation of the two Declarations our own countries, in developing countries and in countries with economies in transition. We look forward to the joint Italy-US international workshop to be held in Rome in November 2001 on the development of strategies to address childhood asthma. We also encourage participation in the Children's Environmental Health II: A Global Forum for Action taking place in September 2001, Washington DC and in the UNICEF Special Summit on Children in New York.

48. In this regard we underline the related risks associated with air pollution in urban areas, and we recognise the relevant role of all levels of government and of the national and regional initiatives towards promoting more sustainable cities. We note the particular importance of traffic and transport in contributing to air quality deterioration, in developing and developed countries alike, and stress the need to ensure the integration of urban and regional planning and national innovation policy in the transportation sector within the environment and health debate. These issues confront developing and developed countries alike.

49. We look forward to continuing our cooperation and dialogue on this important issue.

IV. Edict of the Taliban leadership on destruction of all statues and shrines in Afghanistan

50. Mindful that the diversity of natural and human systems is at the core of sustainable development, we express dismay and shock at reports of the edict of the Taliban leadership ordering the destruction of all statues and shrines in Afghanistan. We strongly urge the Taliban leadership not to implement this deeply tragic decision and fully support the efforts of UNESCO to this end. Afghanistan's rich cultural heritage is of vital importance not only to the people of the Afghanistan but also to the world as a whole.