

1.73 Protocol or Other Legal Instrument to the Framework Convention on Climate Change

AWARE that the Geneva Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change (18 July 1996) states that the Second Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change should provide a scientific basis for urgently strengthening action at the global, regional and national levels, particularly action by Annex I Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change to limit and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and for all Parties to support the development of a protocol or other legally binding instrument;

RECALLING that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Second Assessment Report has concluded that atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases are increasing largely because of human activities, that climate is changing and is expected to change in the future and that the balance of evidence suggests a discernible human influence on the Earth's climate;

RECALLING that the Second Assessment Report projects that, without specific actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, the Earth's mean temperature will increase by between 0.8 to 3.5 degrees Celsius by 2100, a rate faster than any observed during the last 10,000 years, and sea level is projected to rise by about 15 to 95 centimeters by 2100;

RECALLING also that the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, by its Decision 1/CP.1, known as the Berlin Mandate, committed Annex 1 Parties to strengthening their commitments by setting "quantified limitation and reduction objectives within specified time-frames, such as 2005, 2010 and 2020, for their anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol", and all Parties to "reaffirm existing commitments in Article 4.1 and continue to advance the implementation of these commitments";

RECALLING FURTHER that the objective of the Framework Convention on Climate Change is ultimately to achieve a stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere "at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system";

RECOGNIZING that a doubling of equivalent CO₂ concentrations could occur between 2030 and 2050 under "business-as-usual";

CONCERNED that the impacts identified in the Second Assessment Report for an equivalent doubling of CO₂ levels could have serious consequences for the planet;

RECOGNIZING that even after stabilization of greenhouse gas concentration is achieved, global surface temperature will continue to rise for some decades and sea-level for many centuries;

RECOGNIZING also the need to reduce existing uncertainties by improving estimates of future emissions, understanding of special feedback mechanisms and projections of rates, regional patterns and particular impacts of climate change on ecological systems, biodiversity and human health;

AWARE of significant "no-regrets" opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are available in most countries and of existing cost-effective technologies and policies that can be used to markedly reduce the net emissions of greenhouse gases from industrial, energy supply, energy demand and land management practices;

CONVINCED that the risk of aggregate net damage due to climate change, considerations of risk aversion and a precautionary approach provide strong rationales for actions beyond no-regrets;

CONCERNED that climate change is likely to have wide-ranging and mostly adverse effects on human health, with significant loss of life;

CONCERNED that the projected changes in climate will result in significant, often adverse, impacts on many ecological systems, biodiversity and socio-economic sectors, including food supply and water resources;

CONCERNED that delaying action will likely lead to more rapid rate of climate change, increase the risk of "surprises" and rapid, unanticipated change, and require extreme rates of emission reductions in the future;

CONCERNED also that the impacts of climate change will be more severe in the developing countries of the world, and those countries may have fewer adaptation options;

CONCERNED further that the best available scientific evidence indicates that the significant, long-term sea level rise associated with an increase in CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere will endanger small islands and other low-lying areas;

The World Conservation Congress at its 1st Session in Montreal, Canada, 14–23 October 1996:

CALLS UPON the Conference of the Parties, at its third meeting, to adopt a protocol or other legal instrument to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) that:

- a) contains legally binding targets and timetables for limitation and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from Annex 1 Parties that:
 - i) are designed to promote a safe rate of change leading ultimately to the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system;
 - ii) anticipate a regular process for revising emission limitation obligations in order to achieve the ultimate objectives of the FCCC;
 - iii) are capable of being monitored and verified;
- b) reaffirm all Parties' existing commitments in Article 4.1 of the FCCC and continue to advance implementation of these commitments;
- c) provides for and facilitates, in accordance with a precautionary approach and the best available scientific information, periodic review and strengthening of Parties' commitments;
- d) promotes capacity-building and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to mitigate and aid in adaptation to climate change and its impacts;
- e) allows for the appropriate coordination of Parties' policies and measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change and the impacts of climate change;
- f) incorporates a process that promotes universal participation of Parties in the Protocol or other legal instrument.

Note. This Recommendation was adopted by consensus. The delegations of the State members Norway, Sweden and United States indicated that had there been a vote they would have abstained, in the case of Norway and United States so as not to influence negotiations under the Framework Convention on Climate Change.