

Berlin Declaration

INTRODUCTION

This international congress 'Changing Climate – Facts, Impacts, Perspectives' has brought together international experts and decision makers from business, politics and science in order to identify effective courses of action to protect the climate. The ongoing climate changes and their causes are known, and many of the consequences are foreseeable. It is now up to us to act with resolve to minimise as far as possible the major risks that we face from a warming world.

PREMISE

It is already accepted by the vast majority of climate scientists that human activities, through greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels and land use changes, are the main driver of the climate change that is now taking place. In this regard it can no longer be prevented. What is now important, however, is to reduce as far as we can the risk of 'dangerous climate change', i.e. an increase in temperature that causes serious threats to ecosystems and human society. We must do all we can to keep the global average temperature rise from pre-industrial times to below 2 °C . We recognise the challenge this represents. To maintain this 2 °C limit, the concentration of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere would need to be stabilised at a maximum of 450 ppm CO₂ equivalent, and probably below this value. This requires global emissions to be reduced by more than half by the middle of the century, and this is in the face of continually increasing global industrialisation and the rapidly growing global 'thirst for energy'. Since the industrial nations have by far the greatest emissions in total as well as per capita, they must reduce emissions by a disproportionately large amount, probably by around 70-80% by 2050.

Even in attaining this goal, all nations will need to prepare for impacts from climate changes to which the Earth is already committed through past emissions, taking account also that the world will continue to warm for several decades after the stabilisation of greenhouse gas levels is achieved.

CORPORATE LEADERS GROUP AND FRAMEWORK

We expressly support the above goal, which can only be reached through a close alliance of business, politics and science. We intend to establish a group comparable to the British Corporate Leaders Group on Climate Change. We want to motivate further companies to join this movement and we want to link up with corporate groups in other countries.

By consulting with science and politics, we will identify those measures and framework necessary for keeping to the 2 °C limit. This certainly includes creating a long-term framework, including a global market for emission certificates that offers effective incentives for reducing CO₂-Emissions. Existing approaches should be made globally compatible and combined. The already existing flexible mechanisms provided by the Kyoto Protocol – JI/CDM – are excellent instruments that can be made even more effective by being freed from bureaucracy.

That is why we must draw up proposals for a road map for post 2012 that bridges existing international disparities and does not exclude emerging and developing countries. They should be involved through flexible agreements that take account of the specific situations in their respective countries.

We must considerably increase the investment made in energy research and increase energy efficiency.

CULTURAL CHANGE

The 2 °C goal can only be attained if there is a turning point in global awareness: the acceptance of climate protection by society as a whole as a central and acute challenge. This challenge provides at the same time a great opportunity: the opportunity to provide human society with a sustainable, future-oriented economic foundation.

Berlin, 21 September 2006