



The Permanent Mission of Iceland to the United Nations

**Statement by
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Climate change as a global challenge

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Madame President

We thank you for organizing this meeting, and we welcome the upcoming high-level event on 24 September. Climate change is one of the major concerns of mankind today; in the last few months our attention has been drawn to the problem by many reports that have been published regarding the issue. Global warming is reality and a global action is needed.

The international community needs to address climate change in a more concerted way than ever. A solution will need the commitment of every nation and we welcome the signals given at the G8 and the G8+5 Summit in Heiligendamm in June. Iceland, as a party to the Kyoto Protocol, is fully committed to doing its part. Iceland's view is that it is essential to negotiate further commitments for the years beyond 2012 and that a global commitment is not only desired, but needed. Iceland has recently adopted a new climate change strategy, with a vision to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by 50-75% by 2050.

We have already accomplished to meet more than 70% of our total energy consumption with renewable sources such as geothermal and hydropower. Our next steps in the reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions will be attained by application of new technology, economic instruments, net removals in the land use sector and project-based mechanisms.

Hydrogen is an example of new technology; Hydrogen is a carrier of electricity, a clean fuel that can replace fossil fuels. Already in 1999 the Icelandic Government made clear its intention to progress towards a Sustainable Hydrogen Society.

Contrary to what many people believe, exploitable geothermal resources are widely available. Geothermal energy is accessible in up to 90 countries, many of them developing states.

Iceland has a long experience of assisting in enabling developing countries to harness their geothermal energy, for heating as well as for electricity generation. Since 1979, the United Nations University Geothermal Training Programme has been operated in Iceland and since then 359 fellows from 40 countries have finalized the 6 month training. The programme is an important contributor to the increase of geothermal utilization in the world. The aim of the UNU-Geothermal Training Programme is to assist developing countries with significant geothermal potential to build up or strengthen groups of specialists that cover most aspects of geothermal exploration and development. The potential for geothermal energy is large and it could become one of our major source of energy in our efforts to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.

The Icelandic private sector has been exporting know how, particularly regarding harnessing of geothermal energy. The largest project Icelandic companies have been involved in is a geothermal district heating project in the city of Xian yang in China. The district heating is replacing the coal-fired heating facilities for the community.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize that Iceland is willing to share its experience in the field of renewable resources with other nations. The threat we all are facing has to be dealt with in a global perspective. No country can think locally.

Thank you