



BELARUS

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High-level event

“The future in our hands: addressing the leadership challenge of climate change”

Thematic plenary “Reducing emissions and stabilising the climate: safeguarding our common future”

New York, 24 September 2007

Statement by

Ambassador Andrei Dapkiunas

**Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Belarus to the UN**

On behalf of the Republic of Belarus I would like to join those delegations which highlighted today the need for concrete, differentiated and feasible commitments on climate change, rather than mere declarations of intent.

Over the last few years, countries with economies in transition, including Belarus, have been experiencing a high growth rate. However, despite this fact, these countries still need a freer access to the advanced nature-conservation technologies based on renewable energy resources. We urge the United Nations to render to Member States the appropriate large-scale and long-term assistance to facilitate such access.

One of the forms of this assistance could be the establishment under the aegis of the United Nations of **an additional international financing mechanism** to provide large-scale and long-term aid to developing countries and countries in transition in order to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including through the application of more environmentally friendly technologies.

We believe that **regional cooperation** is an essential element in addressing the challenge of climate change. The example of such cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe is the Central-European Initiative (CEI). In the framework of CEI a partnership between industrialised countries and countries with economies in transition creates a favourable background for addressing climate change in the region.

Availing myself of the opportunity to address the distinguished Heads of State and Government present here, I would like to extend a kind request to facilitate the finalisation in your countries of the internal legal procedures required for the enactment of the amendment to Annex B to the Kyoto Protocol with the quantified emission reduction commitment of Belarus. Full-scale participation of Belarus in the Kyoto protocol will be an additional contribution to the global process of combating climate change.

Information on the policies of Belarus in addressing the challenge of climate change is circulated as an annex to this statement.

In conclusion I would like to inform you that the Republic of Belarus will continue to participate actively and constructively in negotiations on a new international treaty in the framework of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change.

BELARUS: NATIONAL POLICY ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Belarus is a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as of August 9, 2000 and a party to the Kyoto Protocol as of November 24, 2005.

The main objective of the Belarusian energy policy is to enable the most cost-effective utilisation of energy resources for secure and safe supply of energy to the economy and people, while observing necessary ecological requirements. The Government of Belarus puts strong emphasis on energy conservation, energy efficiency and use of renewable sources of energy as a means of reducing GHG emissions, decreasing dependency on energy imports and improving the country's energy security. The Program of Social Economic Development of Belarus 2006-2010, adopted by the Presidential Decree No 384 of June 12, 2006, identifies energy and resources conservation as a priorities for the country's development.

Heavy decline in industrial output and energy consumption and shifts in fuel usage (replacement of crude oil and coal with natural gas) that took place in 1990-1995, as well as a targeted national energy policy toward improvement of energy efficiency that has been enforced by the government since mid-1990 have contributed to a considerable reduction in the total primary energy consumption (from 63.1 mln tons of coal equivalent (tce) in 1990 down to 35.9 mln tce in 2004) and total GHG emissions (from 127.4 mln tons in 1990 down to 74.4 tons in 2004) compared to the baseline 1990 year under the Kyoto Protocol.

Despite the considerable advances in energy conservation and energy efficiency in Belarus, its energy intensity factor in 2003 (as measured by tons of oil equivalent to produce US \$1,000 of GDP adjusted by purchasing power parity as at 2000) was 0.46, according to the data from the International Energy Agency, which is 1.6-2.2 times higher than in countries with similar climatic conditions, such as Canada, Finland, Sweden, Poland. These figures indicate considerable potential for reduction of energy consumption and GHG emissions in Belarus.

Therefore, the National Energy Conservation Program 2006-2010, coordinated by the Energy Efficiency Department of the State Committee on Standardisation, sets priority on promotion of renewable sources of energy, improvement of regulatory framework for production and utilisation of domestic fuels and development of market-based financing mechanisms for energy conservation.

The program is expected to reduce GDP energy intensity 26.1-30.4% by 2010 compared to 2005, save at least 7.7 mln tce of energy resources and reduce GHG emissions (in CO₂ equivalent) by at least 12 mln tons.

Under an intensive development scenario until 2010 with GDP expected to grow 8.5-9.5% annually, the total consumption of energy resources is forecast to increase an average 2-2.5% annually, GDP energy intensity to decline 6-7% annually and overall GHG emissions (including sinks) are expected to stay below 80 mln tons, i.e. at 60% of the baseline level in 1990.

Participation of Belarus in the flexible mechanisms of the Kyoto protocol will create additional opportunities for energy conservation, transfer of energy-efficient technologies and foreign direct investments. To be able to use legitimately these mechanisms, the country must have the requisite institutional and regulatory framework duly established.

A party to the Kyoto Protocol and one of the most advanced economies in transition, Belarus, along with industrialised countries, is concerned about global climate change caused by human activity and acknowledges its share of responsibility for this phenomenon. The Kyoto Protocol sets stringent GHG emission caps, calls for targeted actions toward improvements in energy efficiency and requires establishment of an enabling institutional and regulatory framework (GHG inventories, registry of reduction units, reporting to the UNFCCC Secretariat).

Actual GHG emissions in Belarus are going to be lower than the amount assigned under the Kyoto protocol during both the first (2008-2012) and the second (2013-2017) commitment

periods, which would enable Belarus to attract investments into environmental and energy efficiency projects.

The Government of Belarus has approved a Plan of Action for Implementation of the Kyoto Protocol to UNFCCC 2005-2012, whereby the Ministry of Environment is tasked with coordination of investments within the flexible mechanisms of the Kyoto protocol in all sectors of the national economy. The Ministry of Environment is generally responsible for meeting the country's commitments under UNFCCC and for the elaboration of a national climate change strategy.

Implementing this plan of action, the Government of Belarus has approved a regulation on the national system for estimation of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks GHGs and a regulation on the national GHG inventory. Belarusian Ekologia Research Center (subsidiary of the Ministry of Environment) was designated as a national center for GHG inventories. Pursuant to the above regulations, a climate change unit has been established within BRC Ekologia. A national inventory report on GHG emissions and sinks has been prepared spanning 1990-2004.

The project-relevant regulatory framework includes:

- Law on Environmental Protection;
- Law on Protection of Atmospheric Air;
- Law on Energy Conservation;
- National Strategy for Environmental Protection until 2015;
- National Action Plan on Rational Use of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection 2006-2010;
- National Energy Conservation Program 2006-2010;
- Second National Communication to UNFCCC;
- Draft National Climatic Program.

Belarus as an Annex I country should meet the following eligibility requirements in order to participate in the international cooperation mechanisms provided for in the Kyoto protocol:

- have its assigned amount of GHG emissions calculated in terms of tons of CO₂-equivalent emissions;
- have in place a national system for the estimation of anthropogenic emissions by sources and anthropogenic removals by sinks of greenhouse gases;
- submit its annual GHG inventories to the UNFCCC Secretariat;
- have in place a national registry of GHG reduction and removal units and annually report such information to the secretariat.

The requirements of the Kyoto protocol became effective for Belarus as of November 24, 2005. However, Belarus was not a party to UNFCCC when the Protocol was adopted and, hence, its GHG reduction target has not been set. For Belarus to be included in Annex B to the Kyoto protocol with an agreed GHG reduction target, the Protocol should be amended accordingly through a decision of the Conference of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. Such decision was adopted at the Conference Parties held on November 6-17, 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya. This decision should be ratified by the three quarters of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

Each country included in Annex I to UNFCCC should have a national system for estimation of GHG emissions and sinks. A key component of this system is an annual national inventory of GHG emissions and sinks consisting of a national inventory report (textual information) and a set of tables in the common reporting format. Belarus has submitted five inventories covering 2000-2004.

Furthermore, Belarus submits on a regular basis its national communications (once in 3-5 years as per relevant decisions of the Conference of Parties to UNFCCC) which should provide details, along with the inventories and GHG emission forecasts, on the policy and measures undertaken by the party to mitigate climate change and adapt to unfavourable climatic changes. Belarus submitted its first National Communication in 2003, followed by its Second National Communication in 2006.

To be able to perform transactions with assigned amount units and emission reduction units, Belarus is setting up a national registry to track and record transactions under the relevant mechanisms, to be connected with the international registry.

In addition, to be able to participate in the joint implementation and emissions trading mechanisms of the Kyoto protocol, Belarus with the support of international organisations is taking the following measures:

- establishing the following infrastructure: national procedures for selection and approval of JI projects, necessary administrative components, system for JI projects preparation, system for training and information sharing;
- elaborating a draft long-term strategy for Belarus' participation in the flexible mechanisms of the Kyoto protocol (ET and JI);
- developing the framework for implementation of the green investment scheme in Belarus;
- developing recommendations for enhancing the legal and regulatory framework (including drafting respective legal acts) on utilization of the assigned amount and distribution of the revenue from the sale of AAUs and ERUs;
- drafting necessary regulatory acts for Belarus' participation in the flexible Kyoto mechanisms;
- identifying investors willing to cooperate on JI implementation;
- acquiring hands-on experience in development of JI projects and submission to specialized funds (ERUPT and others);
- developing a set of PINs in the country priority areas;
- procuring (through international tender bid process) and supporting the registry of reduction units, compilation of the registry readiness report;
- building the consulting capacity of specialised organisations for JI project development.
- running extensive information campaign on Kyoto protocol implementation, publication and dissemination of promotional materials;
- training and experience sharing in Kyoto protocol for Belarusian experts.

A number of projects of technical assistance in sphere of climate change are being implemented in Belarus:

- UNDP project on capacity building for implementation of flexible mechanisms of Kyoto Protocol in Belarus;
- EC-funded technical assistance project to support climate change, energy supply, and environmental issues in Belarus and Ukraine in the elaboration of the national climate change strategy;
- World Bank 'Social Infrastructure Retrofitting' project aims to reduce the use of energy resources in the social sector of Belarus;
- Japanese Government's grant to support the investment Social Infrastructure Retrofitting Project;
- UNDP-GEF project 'Biomass Energy for Heating and Hot Water Supply in Belarus' aims to reduce GHG emissions by removing barriers to cost-effective utilization of wood and wood waste for heating;
- UNDP-GEF project 'Removing Barriers to Energy Efficiency Improvements in the State Sector in Belarus';
- OSCE and Ministry of Environment's initiative 'Development and Implementation of JI Projects under Kyoto Protocol: Lessons and Prospects'.

Additional information on the Belarusian national policies on climate change can be found at: <http://www.minpriroda.by>