



LITHUANIA

**Statement by President of the Republic of Lithuania Valdas Adamkus
at High-Level Event “The Future in Our Hands: Addressing the Leadership
Challenge of Climate Change”**

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UN Headquarters, New York**

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Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by congratulating the leadership shown by the Secretary General on climate change as a global challenge that requires global efforts. Today global warming affects every person and every state – rich and poor, small and big alike. It affects all aspects of our lives, from changing habitats and migration patterns to social and economic growth.

Every day we receive new and vitally important signs from Nature: two-thirds of natural processes that support life on Earth have been degraded or overexploited; melting ice keeps millions of people in coastal areas around the globe in fear for their future; desertification across Asia and Africa reduces the land usable for crops and threatens livelihoods.

All these greatly consequential processes are caused by human activities. Global warming leads to increased poverty, forced migration and billions of dollars spent just to mitigate the consequences of environmental neglect. Time is not on our side as these negative consequences increase several-fold each year. The cost of our inaction will be 20 times higher than the investment needed today for actions focused on fighting global warming. On the other hand, our efforts to have a sustainable environment must be well-balanced against our objectives to have sustainable economic growth, which is essential for reducing poverty.

The last several years constituted a breakthrough in understanding the dangerous consequences of environmental neglect when even the most ardent opponents of global warming have started acknowledging the disastrous effects of unrestrained human activity. This reality requires urgent, ambitious, concerted, and focused efforts by the whole global community. But the starting point must be a strong political will by all countries, international organizations, and political leaders for real and concrete actions.

Lithuania believes that the UN Climate Change Process is the appropriate forum for negotiating future global action to this effect. I am convinced that the world needs a more coherent and inclusive system of international environmental governance. This system needs to be strengthened by establishing a UN Organization for the Environment based on UNEP, with a revised and strengthened mandate.

We all have common ownership of the Earth and a common responsibility to leave a clean environment for future generations. We must translate this responsibility into real action. Having the Bali conference in mind, I call on all countries to come to the negotiating table later this year with a will to compromise and an ambition to conclude by 2009 a global and comprehensive post-2012 agreement. Before such an agreement is reached, the European Union has already made a commitment to achieve at least a 20 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared to 1990 levels. Lithuania strongly supports this commitment and does its best to fulfill it. Our National Sustainable Development and National Energy Strategies embody ambitious goals related to the mitigation of climate change, including an increase of the share of bio-fuel in the transportation field of up to 20 percent by the year 2025.

The Renovation and Modernization Program for Residential Buildings is aimed at reducing the consumption of heat energy and fuel by 30 percent by the year 2020 in the housing sector. Lithuania will continue showing sufficient political will to implement these ambitious national strategies.

Human behavior is part of the problem, but also part of the solution. Through education programs we have to change our consumption patterns. Through market-based incentives we have to ask the business community to design and use environmentally friendly technologies and products. We need greater investments in green technologies, ambitious afforestation and reforestation programs. Last year alone we planted 21 thousand hectares of new forests, quite a significant measure given the size of Lithuania. Also, over the last decade much attention in my country has been devoted to a wider use of indigenous and renewable energy resources. Consequently, we will increase the share of these resources in the primary energy balance up to 12 percent by the year 2010.

I also believe that all environmental agreements and policies require a new kind of partnership between multilateral institutions, governments, private sectors, NGOs, and financial institutions. We must act now to fight global warming if we do not want future generations to regard us as leaders who betrayed their promises and did not live up to their responsibilities.

Thank you