

Commission on Sustainable Development, 14th Session
Address by Mr Dick Roche TD
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Ireland
10 May 2006

Thank you Mr Chairman. I want to associate myself at the outset with what my colleague Josef Proll has said on behalf of the EU.

As other contributors have said, Mr Chairman, the themes for this cycle of CSD are inextricably linked. In this review year, it is useful to have the opportunity to learn from each other and share experiences.

We all accept that energy is central to economic growth. We need to source that energy and to use it in a way that is sustainable. A huge global effort is needed to do this.

The really big challenge is to decouple energy demand, economic growth and environmental degradation.

In Ireland we have seen our GDP grow by 140% between 1990 and 2004 while total primary energy requirement increased by 59% the overall level of emissions from energy increased by just 45%.

Growth can be achieved without a parallel growth in emissions.

As Secretary General Annan said this morning, we must move away from seeing environmental, economic and social considerations as competing issues.

Pascal Lamy referred to the limited use of renewables. Developing renewable energy technologies is a major challenge. I do not believe that we can leave this issue to business alone. Business has one overriding objective - private profit. Intergovernmental cooperation should have something higher as its objective - the objective of public service.

We must identify solutions that increase access to reliable and affordable energy services. We must strive for further energy efficiency and move away from unsustainable patterns of consumption and production.

We need to reduce energy related environmental and health problems related to air pollution and climate change.

Against this background, it is our responsibility as Governments to create the atmosphere in which the implementation of the commitments made in Agenda 21, in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and reiterated in the 2005 World Summit is possible.