



# LATVIA

Statement by

**H.E. Mr. RAIMONDS VĒJONIS**

**Minister of Environment  
of the Republic of LATVIA**

**Commission on Sustainable Development  
15<sup>th</sup> Session**

**New York  
May 9, 2007**

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Latvia aligns itself with the statement made by Germany on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to add some additional comments and namely regarding climate change and energy.

Solving the global environmental problems is not easy. To attain favourable results, co-ordinated action of countries all over the world is necessary. The climate change mitigation policies and measures to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to increase carbon dioxide removals in Latvia is gaining higher priority in line with the common policy and concerns about climate change in the world and the European Union.

Mr. Chairman,

The primary goal is to ensure global reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It can be achieved by implementing activities in the climate change mitigation policy areas, such as:

- 1) increase the share of renewable energy sources in the energy balance;
- 2) increase efficient and rational use of energy resources;
- 3) develop an environmentally friendly transport system;
- 4) promote the implementation of the best available techniques, environmentally friendly technologies and cleaner production;
- 5) promote the implementation of environmentally sound agricultural methods that reduce direct greenhouse gas emissions;
- 6) increase CO<sub>2</sub> removals in forestry;
- 7) establish an up-to-date municipal waste management system, ensuring collection of biogas in municipal waste landfills.

As we all know, global climate change is a major challenge that human kind is facing now and will face in the years to come. The main challenge for the international society is now to assist the developing countries in choosing the right path of development contributing to measures aiming at stabilization and reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions in the coming years.

Mr. Chairman,

Climate change is closely linked to energy supply issue. The rapid development of global economy, including emerging economies, will require more and more energy, including energy from fossil fuels. The rise of oil and natural gas prices should stimulate development of environmentally friendly and low emission technologies. Otherwise the

issue of energy safety will be an overriding priority for many countries, one even more important than the need to stop, global warming.

Latvia considers that energy supply security is a precondition for further development and economic growth of the world.

Speaking on the energy as one of crucial angles of sustainable development, I would like to emphasize that nuclear energy does not comply with the criteria of sustainable development because it is neither safe nor reliable. It also doesn't meet the criteria of economic viability as it is not affordable without public subsidies. I fully support the statement about the need to phase out harmful subsidies in order to reflect environmental impacts of various energy sources.

In Latvia, almost half of its electricity consumption is provided by renewable energy sources (48.4 % in 2005), with hydro power being the key resource.

Moreover, Latvia recognizes the need for further increased share of renewable energy in the future energy mix. Any new greenhouse gas emission reduction targets after 2012 will require significant changes in the energy sector. We need to ensure, that such changes will not influence the energy safety at national, regional and global scale, in a negative way.

Mr.Chairman,

I also call upon countries to agree on the set of criteria which would define sustainable energy and especially sustainable biofuels, which should be subject to adequate risk, environmental and social impact assessments. GMOs cannot be used for sustainable biofuel production.

Latvia believes that all countries should adopt and implement national and regional energy policy targets in order to increase energy efficiency, increase share of renewable energy in energy supply and its consumption and assure access to sustainable energy.

To be able to implement those targets set by policy documents, it is crucial to find innovative solutions which would lead to environmentally sound and resource efficient technologies. Today we need to create an enabling environment for investment in science, which is a key element for sustainable development in future.

Thank you.