

Dear members of the BERMUN 2003

The agenda of this year's BERMUN is "Managing and Preserving the World's Natural Resources: A Shared Responsibility."

A topic which is of great interest to me personally and as a member of the German Parliament and the Committee on the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of the Deutscher Bundestag.

Many efforts have been made in the protection of our environment, but unfortunately this urgent topic is still not a priority.

I therefore see the importance of increasing awareness of environmental protection on all levels of interest.

Thank you for setting environmental protection on your agenda today

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One of the greatest environmental, as well as economic threats facing the planet today is the change of the Earth's climate.

This change is linked to many environmental problems such as biodiversity, desertification and water shortage creating a vicious cycle of ecological disasters.

The evidence for a change in climate is all around us: the Earth's surface temperature has risen zero point six degrees Celsius in the 20th century, glaciers are retreating, sea levels are rising, extreme weather conditions such as droughts and floods are multiplying.

The most recent examples of such weather events are the flood of the Elbe and the extreme drought Europe experienced this summer.

Scientists agree that the cause for global warming lies in the increase of concentration of the six main greenhouse gases.

Human activity has been named as the main cause for the increase. Burning of fossil fuels in power plants, road and air transport, and deforestation cause harmful emissions of greenhouse gases.

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To combat climate change international actions had to be taken. The first major step in the right direction was made in 1997 when the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change was adopted.

The Kyoto Protocol commits industrial nations to legally binding reductions in emission of six greenhouse gases. The global cut is five point two per cent.

Future steps has to be more significant to combat climate change.

However, the Protocol needs to be ratified by at least fifty five countries accounting for fifty five per cent of developed country emissions of carbon dioxide in the base year 1990.

So far, eighty four Parties have signed, one hundred and nineteen ratified, accounting for forty four per cent of emissions.

To account for the missing eleven per cent, the US or Russia will need to ratify the Protocol.

Unfortunately, the US has already declared it won't ratify. Thanks to Mr. Bushs election campaign donors.

Russia's ratification is unsure even though it would bring the country many economic advantages.

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The Kyoto Protocol includes three flexible mechanisms to enable cost effective emissions reduction and sustainable development.

First, International Emissions Trading allows parties of the Convention to engage in international trading of greenhouse gas emissions credits.

The EU will install such a system starting in 2005 with dedicated caps for emission of greenhouse gases

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Second, Joint Implementation allows trading of emissions reduction units among industrial nations, if companies from one country help to reduce emissions in another country.

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The last mechanism of the Protocol, Clean Development Mechanism, generates investments in developing countries.

Such projects enhance the transfer of environmentally-friendly technologies and promote sustainable development. Credits awarded for CDM projects can be used towards compliance with national commitments.

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JI and CDM can be effective tools to help countries achieve their Kyoto commitments.

What needs to be kept in mind is that there must be a limit to those emissions reductions projects.

It should be a country's priority to achieve the reduction commitments within their own borders and not through investments in other countries.

It's a question of long-term success in ghg reductions

And it's a question of showing poor countries, that climate protection and economic development can be done the same time

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Most industrial countries have committed to the Kyoto Protocol.

The United States of America, which emits about one-third of the developed world's man-made greenhouse gases, has so far rejected a national emissions trading scheme for carbon dioxide. The Bush administration surprised the world by pulling out of the Kyoto pact.

President Bush said the cuts would be too costly for the U.S. economy. However, even though US firms might have a financial advantage in the short-term, the long-term disadvantage will occur out of uncertainty in climate change policy and advanced technology.

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The European Union has been on the forefront of international efforts to combat climate change.

Its Kyoto commitment of an eight per cent cut in emissions between 2008 and 2012 is a realistic goal that can be accomplished with the cooperation of the EU national governments.

In 2000, the European Commission launched the European Climate Change Programme to prepare policies, measures, and an emissions trading scheme.

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The EU Emissions Trading system is an internal system which limits carbon dioxide emissions from industries.

The large carbon dioxide emitters will be allocated allowances on an annual basis through national allocation plans. Emitters are required to matchkeep their emissions to a level below their limits.

Excess allowances can be sold to other companies or kept for future use. Vice versa, companies that exceed their limits can invest in abatement technology or buy allowances on the market to match their emissions, whichever is cheaper.

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Climate Change is a global challenge that affects developed and developing countries alike.

For the developing nations, climate change presents social challenges because most do not have sufficient human, financial and technical capacity to effectively address climate change.

There is a wide range of socio-economic and environmental conditions within the developing world.

While many of the poorest developing countries contribute little to global greenhouse gas emissions, many are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as sea level rise, desertification and more frequent extreme weather events.

At the other end of the scale, some developing countries are among the largest emitters of greenhouse gases. The Kyoto Protocol seeks to encourage the participation of developing countries in global efforts to combat climate change and to promote sustainable development.

To ensure this, developing countries require help from industrial nations. So far, developing countries don't have quantitative commitments under the Kyoto Protocol until 2012.

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For the future, it is crucial that there is going to be a significant reduction of greenhouse gases beyond the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol.

Germany, for example, aims to cut forty per cent of its emissions by 2020 and eighty per cent by 2050.

Additionally, energy efficiency and international laws play a key role to ensure long-term emissions reduction.

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One of the most effective ways, economically and ecologically, to protect the world's climate and to preserve our natural resources is the development of renewable energies.

As we all know, natural resources are limited and are running low. Fossil fuels, such as oil, coal, and gas are not infinitely available and their combustion produces emissions harmful to the climate, resulting in considerable damages and costs.

Renewable energies, on the other hand, benefit the economy as a whole by reducing harmful greenhouse gases and by creating new jobs.

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The leading roles in the development of renewable energies plays Germany.

The release of fifty million tons of carbon dioxide have already been avoided by the renewable energies.

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The Renewable Energy Sources Act, short EEG, obliges electricity grid operators to give priority to the purchase of electricity from solar energy, hydropower, wind power, geothermal power and biomass, and to pay a specified price for it.

So far, more than 130,000 jobs have already been created due to renewable energies.

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The future envisions an expansion of renewable energies. The European Union aims to double the share of renewable energies from six to twelve per cent by 2012.

Germany shoots for a realistic doubling by two-thousand-ten, another doubling by two-thousand-twenty, and a fifty per cent share of renewables by two-thousand and fifty!

The most potential in Germany lies in wind, geothermal energy, solar, and biomass.

To conclude my speech, I cannot emphasise enough the need of an international commitment in the protection of our natural resources.

It is not only our responsibility that we meet our needs today, but even more important, that we leave a healthy and viable world for future generations.

I therefore urge you to consider the protection of natural resources, sustainable development and the need for internationally binding laws when you represent your country at this year's BERMUN.

Thank you