



**The Director-General
of the
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**

**Message on World Environment Day
5 June 2008**

We know that the cumulative impact of unmitigated climate change is a global concern.

We know that the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events – caused by climate change – will destroy livelihoods and lives.

And we know that developing countries will suffer the most.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), greenhouse gas emissions have increased by 70% between 1970 and 2004, with CO₂ – by far the largest source – growing by 80% in this same period. And the figures show that industry is one of the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions: it is responsible for 43% of all CO₂ emissions and 65% of the global growth in greenhouse gas emissions. Yet it is industry which has the potential to fuel the economic growth that can lift people out of poverty.

Unless all nations and their industries agree to follow a sustainable, low carbon path in their industrialization, it will not only have an adverse impact on global climate but will also undo economic progress. Because of their paucity of resources or their geographic location, the very survival of some developing countries will be at stake. The only effective remedy is global action.

The world urgently needs to adopt a global low-emissions economic development scenario as a central component of any solution to climate change. Economic growth and the fight against climate change should not just proceed hand in hand; they should become two parts of the same whole, simultaneously addressing cost-effective mitigation, adaptation and sustainable development objectives. Such a scenario is inconceivable without technology and know-how development and dissemination at its heart.

Many of the technologies and instruments needed to respond to the global challenge of climate change are already available. We can expect others to be commercialized in the coming years – once appropriate incentives are put in place. And the flows of experience, know-how and equipment between countries hold the key for transfer of technology for both climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Unfortunately the growth in sustainable development practices has proceeded slowly so far. There are still too many barriers to the deployment and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies and know-how, be it the intransigence of human behaviour, the absence of appropriate policies and regulatory frameworks, or the lack of investment in the infrastructure needed for new energy technologies.



The key is to forge an effective international mechanism for the development and dissemination of technologies. Such a mechanism must aim to remove these barriers, providing predictable financial resources and other incentives for scaling up investment in environmentally sound technologies around the world, and especially in developing countries.

At last year's World Environment Day, I pointed out that a serious commitment by all nations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to provide support to developing countries in reducing their risks from the impacts of climate change, is critical to ensure future human welfare, social stability, peace and security. Nothing of this statement has lost its relevance, especially in view of recent disasters, increased human suffering and an unprecedented global food crisis.

This year, however, I want to add that ultimately we decide ourselves, through our behaviour and investment decisions, how efficiently our energy is generated and used, and how this impacts the global climate. Not just nations, not just individuals. It is also the corporate responsibility of industries to measure their own carbon footprint, to decarbonize their operations, to adopt energy-efficient patterns of production and to set an example in fighting climate change.

We cannot put this off.

We know that acting now will cost far less than acting later.

We need to kick the habit!

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For more information on World Environment Day activities see <http://www.unep.org/wed/2008/english/>