



Chair's Summary Siracusa Environment Ministerial Meeting

**Castello Maniace, Siracusa
22-24 April, 2009**

The Minister of the Environment of Italy, in the framework of the G8 Italian Presidency, convened on April 22-24 the Environment Ministerial Meeting in Siracusa.

The Minister was joined by Environment Ministers and senior officials from G8 countries (Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, the United States of America) and the European Commission, as well as Environment Ministers and senior officials from Brazil, People's Republic of China, India, Mexico, South Africa, Australia, Egypt, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, the Czech Republic as current President of the European Union, Sweden as next President of the European Union and Denmark as President and host of the December 2009 Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (hereafter referred to as the other participating countries).

Heads and senior officials of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the International Energy Agency (IEA), the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural resources (IUCN) the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Bank, the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention (UNFCCC), the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the special representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Climate Change also took part to the meeting.

Ministers of the Environment of the G8 and the other participating countries were joined in the discussion on low carbon technologies by high level representatives of the following companies: ANSALDO ENERGIA, AREVA; BMW; BP CONFINDUSTRIA; DYESOL; EDISON; ENEL S.p.A.; ENI S.p.A; EQI; ERG; FIAT GROUP; FIRST SOLAR; GAZPROM; GENERAL ELECTRIC; LUKOIL; MITSUBISHI; MW CORP. LIMITED; Q-Cells; SHELL; SUGAR CANE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION; TATA; TRILLIUM POWER WIND CORPORATION; WESTINGHOUSE Electric Company.

A consultation with NGOs and Civil Society preceded the discussion.

WWF International, Birdlife International, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC), Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD (BIAC), Global Coalition Against Poverty (GCAP), WWF Italia, Legambiente, Oxfam/Ucodep, Campagna Riforma Banca Mondiale, Action Aid Italia, End Water Poverty Italia, and the Italian Trade Unions CGIL, CISL e UIL took part to the exchange of views.

Ministers and senior officials discussed development and deployment of low carbon technologies in the context of the current financial and economic crises, actions to address climate change and biodiversity.

Children's health and the environment was also part of the Siracusa agenda.

Low Carbon Technologies

The Session on Low Carbon Technologies has been prepared by the technical "High Level Forum on Low Carbon Technologies" organized in the framework of the Italian Presidency of the G8 that was held in Trieste on April 3rd and 4th 2009.

In the introductory key note speech on "*Ensuring Green Growth in a Time of Economic Crisis: the Role of Energy Technology*" Mr. Nabuo Tanaka, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency highlighted the following:

"A global energy revolution will be needed if we are successfully to tackle the challenges posed by climate change and low-carbon technologies must be at its heart. The change required is both unprecedented and urgent, but it can be achieved if we start acting now. The economic stimulus packages being adopted by many governments provide an excellent opportunity to kick-start cleaner, more sustainable growth in the energy sector, while delivering jobs and competitiveness".

Ms. Katherine Sierra, Vice President for Sustainable Development of The World Bank in her key note speech on "*Financing Technology to Support Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Growth*" underlined that: "*Actions on climate change is urgent and cannot be delayed. It requires a global response for which the needed large-scale dissemination of existing and breakthrough low carbon technologies can be greatly facilitated by a combination of public policies bold international collaboration involving public and private sectors and a smart utilization of financing instruments already available as well as the mobilization of additional finance*".

The discussions focused on the perspectives and challenges for the development and deployment of low carbon technologies, taking into consideration the current financial and economic crisis.

Several Ministers highlighted that low carbon technologies for the reduction of global emissions, such as energy efficiency technologies, renewable energies and sustainable biofuels, are already available. What it has to be addressed urgently is the effective deployment and dissemination of these technologies supported by adequate investments. To this regard private sector representatives recalled the importance of having a clear long term regulatory framework to create an enabling environment for high capital investments.

The Chair recognized a wide consensus on the relevant mitigation potential of energy efficiency in all sectors and on the need to adopt more effective implementing strategies in order to take full advantage of such potential.

Most of the Ministers, private sector representatives, NGOs and civil society highlighted that recovery and stimulus packages provide a unique opportunity to shift towards green growth by including investments in low carbon technologies to address both economic development and emissions reduction. To this end the stimulus packages should be seen as an opportunity to be seized to build on synergies between actions to combat climate change and economic recovery initiatives and encourage growth and sustainable development.

The Chair acknowledged that low carbon technologies dissemination should be “inclusive”, paying particular attention to the access to energy for the poorest, that are facing serious development challenges. To this end international public private cooperation initiatives should be strengthened both for the development and dissemination of low carbon technologies in developed and developing countries also looking at the innovative model of South – South cooperation.

Further to deployment of existing technologies, some Ministers recalled the necessity of strengthen the public and private investments in innovative low carbon technologies with particular reference to carbon capture and storage. In this regard it was emphasized the importance of increasing the acceptability of new technologies through a comprehensive and clear information to overcome scepticism and concerns. In this contest, some Ministers and private sectors representatives mentioned the role of nuclear energy in reducing carbon emissions.

Some Ministers and senior officials were pleased to acknowledge the successful launching of the International Research Network for Low Carbon Societies (LCS-RNet) in Trieste, preceded by the first Researchers Meeting which saw the active participation of researchers and government officials from eight countries, as well as experts from intergovernmental organizations, that discussed the strategic planning and the future activities of the Network.

The G8 Ministers and senior officials supported the innovative nature of the International Research Network for Low Carbon Societies, namely the integration of science and technology, society, and policy, that should be achieved through a broad

participation of research institutions from G8 and other Countries and requested the LCS-RNet to report back its outcomes periodically.

The G8 Ministers and other participants were pleased to note that the 1st Annual Meeting of the International Research Network for Low Carbon Societies will be hosted by Italy in October 2009 with the support of the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea.

The Chair, under her responsibility, will forward to the G8 Summit the following message:

- recovery and stimulus packages should include public spending and investments in more efficient production and use of energy, as well as in low carbon technologies, to address both economic development and emissions reduction;
- public – private investments in research, development and demonstration of innovative low carbon technologies should be increased;
- low carbon technologies dissemination should be “inclusive”, paying particular attention to the access to energy for the poorest, that are facing serious development challenges.

Actions to address Climate Change

Following the key note speeches of Mr. Srgjan Kerim, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for climate change and by Mr Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, the debate allowed to share experiences on climate change mitigation activities, highlighting success cases, barriers encountered, lessons learned and planned future actions.

The dialogue has increased confidence among participants and deepened mutual understanding of the challenges we have to face in the next rounds of negotiation. The Chair noticed a strong willingness to reach an ambitious agreement on a post-2012 regime in Copenhagen covering all the elements of the Bali Action Plan.

Some Ministers underlined the importance that the agreement should include a long term vision, midterm mitigation targets, adaptation measures, national action plans, financial support, technology cooperation and capacity building.

Recalling the findings of the 4th assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), all participants emphasized the urgency to tackle climate change.

Some Ministers emphasized the need to limit the average increase temperature to below 2°C and that in order to adequately respond to the findings of IPCC in the short, medium and long-term, midterm targets are needed.

The discussion also highlighted that all countries, on the basis of their respective responsibilities and capabilities, are designing strategies and implementing measures for reducing GHG emissions.

The strategies described include quantitative emissions reductions targets, intensity targets, the establishment of cap & trade systems, the application of carbon price, actions to reduce deforestation as well as the participation in public private partnerships. Strategies for reducing non CO2 emissions also contribute significantly to the global mitigation efforts.

It is evident that a “silver bullet” to address climate change does not exist, and even if the discussion showed how much has already been done, several Ministers underlined that further mitigation efforts are needed.

Some Ministers recalled the need for a leadership role of developed countries in ambitious mitigation efforts as well as the need for significant contributory action by advanced developing countries.

The need for adequate support to enhance developing countries mitigation efforts as well as to adapt to climate change has been highlighted.

It was recalled that adaptation is crucial to addressing the adverse effects of climate change that affect developing countries disproportionately. The Chair recognized the willingness of developed countries to work together with developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable ones, to strengthen their ability to adapt to climate change.

Ministers and senior officials wished that the positive and constructive approach manifested during the debate will be maintained in the upcoming discussions in the G8 Summit and the Chair, under her responsibility, will forward to the Head of States and Governments the following messages:

- climate change needs to be addressed urgently and the willingness to reach an ambitious agreement on a post-2012 regime in Copenhagen covering all the elements of the Bali Action Plan emerged;
- There is a need to significantly advance negotiations. In such respect it is important that, on one hand, developed countries clarify their own position in terms of mid and long term commitments as well as financial support for mitigation and adaptation in developing countries; on the other hand, developing countries clarify their contribution to the global mitigation efforts. To this end it is important to increase mutual confidence, being proactive in order to avoid to remain locked in waiting others' first move.

Biodiversity

The session was opened by a keynote speech of Mr. Pavan Sukhdev, Study Leader of the TEEB and UNEP Project Leader - Green Economy, who introduced the theme “*Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services and Poverty*”. He presented a number of examples to prove the relationship between the unsustainable use of biodiversity and economic loss, labour market instability and poverty. He also showed how conserving biodiversity helps to reduce poverty and enhance human well being, contributes significantly to mitigation and adaptation to climate change, reduces risks of market instability and provides new opportunities for business. Investing in biodiversity today will avoid future costs for ecosystem restoration.

Before opening the floor to the discussion, the Chair also invited Mr Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to take the floor and address the Ministers. Mr Djoghlaif highlighted the importance of the relationship between biodiversity and economics in order to achieve the MDGs. As we are approaching 2010, the International Year of Biodiversity, he also stressed the urgent need to develop the post-2010 strategy. For this reason he also welcomed the Carta di Siracusa on Biodiversity as a milestone in this process.

All of the participants expressed their appreciation for the agreement reached on the Carta di Siracusa on Biodiversity, underlining the added value brought by the enlarged participation of international organizations and Countries other than the G8.

The issues of the relationship between biodiversity and ecosystem services, the economic loss due to the environmental crisis and the cost of inaction, also recalling the TEEB study, were raised by a number of Ministers and representatives of International Organisations.

Participants stressed that biodiversity and ecosystem services represent the basis for human life and wellbeing and that immediate measures to cope with the present trend of biodiversity loss are required.

The issue of science and policy interface was raised and acknowledged as a priority for the future. Some Ministers and senior officials strongly underlined the need to implement an independent, scientific network and mechanism to improve the interface of science and policy (IPBES) for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity by 2010.

The issue of the negotiation on the international access and benefit sharing regime was also discussed. The text included in the “Carta” expressed the common will to work towards the completion of the negotiation on this issue by 2010. Some Ministers also stressed the importance of the implementation of the ABS international regime as a relevant component of the post-2010 framework.

The issue of promoting new and additional financial mechanisms in order to provide adequate resources to meet the need to implement biodiversity conservation policies was also discussed. Some Ministers highlighted the urgency of addressing the needs of developing countries in this regard.

The “Carta” underlines the relation between biodiversity and climate, especially focussing on the role of ecosystems for mitigation and adaptation to climate change. In this context, strengthening and restoring the resilience of ecosystems, as well as ensuring a steady flow of ecosystem services, were also recognised as essential for human well-being and for the achievement of MDGs.

Special emphasis was given to the definition of a common path towards the post-2010 framework on biodiversity. In this respect the “Carta” highlights the need to address the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss urgently on the basis of scientific research, in order to strengthen the resilience of ecosystems.

Some Ministers and senior officials and representatives of international organisations also underlined how the work undertaken to achieve the 2010 Target can provide important lessons for the identification of a post-2010 framework. Some participants also mentioned that such a framework should be designed as a specific, measurable, achievable, reliable and time-bound, science-based strategy.

Taking into account the discussion, the Chair will forward to the G8 Summit the Carta di Siracusa on Biodiversity, along with a message focussing on its main elements as follows:

- Biodiversity and ecosystem services are essential for life and human well-being and for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;
- Biodiversity has a relevant economic value and can contribute to cope with the global economic crisis;
- It is urgent to identify a common path towards the post-2010 framework on biodiversity.

Children’s Health and the Environment

The session on Children’s Health and the Environment has been introduced by the key note addresses of H.E. Testuo Saito, Minister of the Environment of Japan and by H.E. Lisa Jackson, Administrator of the United States Environment Protection Agency.

The G8 and other participating countries have discussed the merits of a renewed and purposeful focus on safeguarding human health as a fundamental objective of

environmental protection and sustainable development. Ministers have discussed the unique circumstances of children in their homes, schools and communities, and find that we can do more to ensure that children are born, grow, develop and thrive in environments with clean air, clean water, safe food, and minimal exposure to harmful chemicals.

The G8 countries identify several actions that are appropriate this day: promote rapid phase out of lead in paint, complete the global elimination of lead in gasoline, collaborate on research studies and research related to the children's health and the environment including impacts of chemicals and heavy metals, effects of climate change, and improve the knowledge and build the capacity of all professionals involved in children's environmental health issues.

Some Ministers expressed the interests to continue to work developing indicators of children's environmental health through the program being managed by the World Health Organization.

In closing the session the Chair informed the participants that fifth Paneuropean Conference on Health and the Environment will be held in Parma in February 2010 and invited them to participate as observers. The Ministers recalled also that in the context of the Paneuropean process fifty-three countries have already adopted a strategic action plan based on agreed priorities for children environment and health. The Plan that already includes actions on air and water quality, chemicals, can represent a best practices.