

3/10/2011

**Introductory speech of M. Philippe Henry, Minister of Environment,  
Land-use Planning and Mobility  
Government of Wallonia, Belgium**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's a great pleasure for me to welcome you to our country for this Conference : EXPLORING KNOWLEDGE GAPS ALONG THE GLOBAL CARBON ROUTE : A HITCHIKER'S GUIDE FOR A BOUNDLESS CYCLE.

Thank you for being here, thank you for being with us, I can assure you the warmest welcome.

On behalf of the Minister Philippe Henry, Minister of environment, land use planning and mobility, I would like to specially thank professor Pierre Regnier and professor Pierre Friedlingstein for initiating and successfully organizing with their team this conference and colloque.

In such a context of over mediatization and hypercommunication, being able to stimulate one of the most outstanding field of research for the future of our society, leads me to believe that this conference is not only scientifically relevant but also important in addressing a strong message to policymakers. Please, keep on going on that track.

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The Conference opens a critical debate for the scientific assessment in the context of international negotiations on climate change.

The Walloon region is firmly committed to handle the fight against climate change.

Our greenhouse gases emissions in the non industrial sector have been reduced by 11% in 2009 compared to 1990. The reductions were deeper in the industrial sector, but it was also due to the economic crisis. We are seeking to cope with a target of 30% of carbon emissions reduction in 2020. So, in Wallonia, the trend towards low carbon emissions and the switch to a low-carbon economy become more effective year by year.

The Minister Philippe Henry will propose to the government to add a climate law to the Walloon legislation. Carbon emissions reduction goals, both global and by sector, will be clearly defined.

Still at the Regional level, while we are already producing 8% of renewable energy in 2010, we are seeking to comply with a target of 20% in 2020 (and notwithstanding our mandatory target of 15% assigned by the EU). A very ambitious program based on biomass, wind, hydro and solar energy is about to be set up by the government of Wallonia.

Having a look at the big picture, the scope of our influence, the scope of our duty has to go, by far, beyond the Belgian boundaries. In this regard, we are playing an active role in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations. We are trying to achieve a comprehensive legally binding set of rules which will delineate the conditions to limit the temperature increase to 2°C. The next deadline in the international negotiations is the Seventeenth Conference of the Parties in Durban (COP 17 in South Africa) in December. We will be present and pro-active. Within Europe, we support a global, balanced, equitable and mandatory agreement.

What really matters for the Walloon region at this stage, is not only the possible decisions in Durban, but also what is actually and currently achieved on the ground.

In the context of the fast start financing 2010-2012 formalized during the last Conference in Cancun, the Walloon region has given priority to effective action, strictly new and operational, especially regarding the Official development assistance (ODA). The Wallonia fast start initiative is supporting biomass projects (Benin, Burkina Faso), Small hydro (Democratic republic of Congo), better water use in agriculture (Senegal) and reforestation (Rwanda). Those projects launched last year will start to deliver results before the end of this year. We will present an overview of our “fast start action plan” and launch a new call for projects during the conference in Durban.

Thank you for your attention. I wish you very fruitful discussions during this important colloque.