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Reducing emissions at home

Bern, 24.09.2007 - 62nd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations - High-Level Event on Climate Change, Statement by Federal Councillor Moritz Leuenberger, New York, 24 September 2007

President of the General Assembly,
Esteemed Heads of State and Government,
Secretary-General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Switzerland welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to bring us together here today. It underlines the urgency of the need to fight global warming. Given that all countries are affected - with the poorest being hit hardest of all - Switzerland considers that all must be committed to taking action. That is imperative in the case of large industrialised countries such as the USA and Australia. But also applies to countries such as Switzerland. And it also applies to emerging and developing countries.

Reducing emissions at home

Each of our countries must reduce its greenhouse gas emissions, and above all within its own national borders. If we aren't able to reduce levels at home, how can we expect to convince others to commit to controlling their own emissions? Furthermore, the price of certificates is likely to soar. It is in each country's interests to reduce its emissions. By economising on fossil fuels and developing home-grown energies, countries render themselves less dependant on limited sources of energy and less vulnerable to international crises.

With this momentum, they can develop new industries, new technologies, they can renew their real estate and vehicles. Reducing emissions is ultimately about creating jobs.

This new momentum is vital: as the fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC shows, current policies will not be enough. We must therefore meet the Kyoto goals and intensify our efforts from now on. Far too few countries are doing so.

Bali: the stakes

The same report also shows that the efforts of industrialised countries alone will not be enough. The Conference of the Parties in Bali must launch negotiations on a future global climate regime. And these negotiations should be concluded at the Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen in 2009.

For Switzerland, this future global climate regime must:

- define a common goal
- ensure substantial reductions in emissions
- be equitable and support sustainable development in all countries
- incorporate incentives for investment in new technologies and renewable energies

Global tax on CO2

In addition to the incentives and the market in certificates, we could also envisage a global tax on CO2 emissions, as I already suggested in Nairobi last year. It would apply the polluter-pays principle.

I propose that this idea be discussed from now on for the period after 2012.

A global tax on CO2 would:

- enable a reduction in dependence on fossil fuels.
- promote the development of clean technologies.
- act as an incentive for companies to save energy.
- This tax would also allow funds to be generated which could be used to protect against the effects of global warming. The money for such measures is cruelly lacking in certain countries!
- Finally, this measure would re-establish a certain balance between those who pollute, and have done so for quite some time, and those who suffer most from its effects. In that way, developing countries would also be motivated to committing themselves to controlling their emissions.

For we need the commitment of all if we truly want to minimise the impact of global warming.

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