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2. Major Changes in Policies to be Found in Country Profiles

This is the first public version of this publication. Since the last internal document (IEA/SLT(90)51(3rd Revision) IEA/CRD(90)76(3rd Revision)), major modifications have been made to the country profiles for Sweden and Switzerland, with minor changes from governments made to some of the other countries.

3. Overview of Status of Country Commitments

Responses to stabilize or reduce greenhouse gas emissions have been the subject of international meetings and intense discussions in many OECD Member countries. Table 2 gives an overview of the status of OECD countries' commitments to actions to deal with climate change. It shows that almost all countries have directly or indirectly adopted some form of emissions target. Those European countries which previously had no target commitment were included under the European Community (EC) Council's Luxembourg agreement of 29th October 1990 which set a goal of stabilization of overall EC emissions of CO₂ at 1990 levels by the year 2000. European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members in turn agreed in November 1990 to adopt the same overall CO₂ target as the EC. During the autumn of 1990, Australia announced an interim planning target to stabilize non-Montreal Protocol greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2000 and to reduce them by 20 per cent by the year 2005 (based on 1988 levels); and Japan announced that it would stabilize per capita emissions of CO₂ at 1990 levels from 2000 onwards. The United States has developed a National Energy Strategy which is expected by the year 2000 to hold emissions of all greenhouse gases, including CFCs, at or below 1990 levels.

Together these undertakings, if achieved, would account for about a 4 per cent reduction of estimated global emissions of CO₂, which comprises the largest proportion of greenhouse gases, by 2000. Emissions of CO₂ would otherwise be expected to grow by 29 per cent by the year 2000 as illustrated in the graph below.

Although most OECD countries have now made some sort of commitment to deal with climate change, there are wide variations in approach. The following distinctions should be noted: