REPUBLIC OF KOREA

1. Position

At the first session of the INC, the Ambassador stated that "the goal of the convention should not be to establish specific guidelines for all countries, but rather, to encourage their voluntary efforts . . ." Quotas "should be done in separate protocols rather than in the Convention." The statement continued to stress that consideration needs to be given to the specific economic and technical capabilities of individual countries under the principle of equity "and the common, but differentiated, responsibilities of the countries". The Convention would also need to ensure special treatment to developing countries for financial assistance "and the preferential transfer of environmental technology."

At the third session of the INC, the Korean statement amplified that some countries "need to maintain rather fast economic growth, at least for some time to come." For countries in the process of industrialisation, these "are the ones that are subject to high sacrifices to climate change convention commitments, at least until they manage to restructure their energy sectors and economies." Korea also stresses that, although some countries may phase out energy-intensive industries, "some other countries might have to fill the gap, often less efficiently. From a global point of view. . . those countries burdened with heavy industries . . . should be credited in one way or the other, at least on a transitionary basis.".

2. Factors Influencing Decisions

Korea is highly dependent on imported coal and oil for its rapid economic development. Over 70 per cent of total energy is imported. It has nine nuclear plants and plans for nine more in the 1990s.

Between 1973 and 1989, TPES grew at an annual rate of 7.7 per cent while total GDP grew 8.5 per cent. In recent years, however, energy consumption has started to grow faster than GDP mainly due to the continued expansion of basic energy-intensive industries and growth in income. The increase in per capita income has brought a rapid increase in demand for vehicles and electronics, although still below the level of most industrialised countries.

During the 1970s economic growth was based on energy-intensive industries such as steel and petrochemicals. Overall energy intensity has declined from 0.76 in 1980 to 0.65 in 1989, with some fluctuations paralleling industrial restructuring.