

In the lead up to the negotiations of the Convention a number of intergovernmental conferences supported the Toronto Target, including the Nordwijk Declaration on Atmospheric Pollution and Climate Change of 1989 and the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Development in the ECE, Bergen, Norway 1990. During this period, a number of developed countries made unilateral statements, or adopted domestic policies that reflected targets and timetables similar to or more ambitious than the Toronto Target.

Most recently, within the European Union, the European Parliament and the European Council have endorsed the development of specific greenhouse gas reduction targets. In September 1994, a European Parliament resolution called upon the EU and Member States to support the Toronto Target. In December 1994, the European Council had asked the Commission to present proposals for progressive reductions for CO₂ and other greenhouse gases for target years 2005 and 2010. Furthermore, the United Kingdom has proposed a target to reduce a basket of greenhouse gases by 5-10% by 2010.

Rather than adopting the "comprehensive" or "basket of gases" approach to emissions limitation, where all sources of greenhouse gases and sinks are considered collectively, the Draft Protocol proposes to deal with each greenhouse gas separately. Because of the scientific and political uncertainty currently surrounding appropriate targets for other greenhouse gases, Article 3(1)(b) does not introduce immediate emissions reductions targets, but requires that Annex I Parties, at the first Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, adopt specific targets and timetables to limit or reduce other greenhouse gases.

The list of gases provided in Article 3(1)(b) is not intended to exclude or prioritise any particular greenhouse gases, except to exclude those controlled by the Montreal Protocol.

The Draft Protocol's approach to addressing all greenhouse gases, in a comprehensive but discrete fashion is consistent with the language in the Berlin Mandate, which calls for "coverage of all greenhouse gases, their emissions by sources and removals by sinks and all relevant sectors."

REVIEW AND REVISION OF TARGETS (Article 3(2))

Article 3(2) authorizes the Meeting of the Parties (as established by Article 8) to "review and revise" both the CO₂ targets and timetables, established in Article 3(1)(a), and the controls for other greenhouse gases that are to be adopted under Article 3(1)(b). This empowers the Meeting of the Parties to analyze the adequacy of the existing measures and to adopt further emissions reductions if required by science and agreed to by the parties.

Any revision of the Protocol's commitments is to be done "in accordance with the precautionary principle and the best available scientific information and assessment of climate change". This is intended to ensure that while the future development of the Protocol should be science driven, the lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures designed to prevent climate change. The precautionary principle has become a standard feature of recent