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National climate policy: UBA calls for bolder action

New background paper as Green Week starts

Germany must identify and implement potential heretofore untapped to reduce emissions if it is avoid the far-reaching consequences of global warming. "We must become bolder in our efforts to protect ourselves and our environment in the long term from the impact of climate change", said Dr. Thomas Holzmann, Vice President of the Federal Environment Agency (UBA). This is the message of a new UBA background paper titled *Klimaschutz konkret: Mut zum Handeln* which includes an evaluation of Germany's climate protection policy, published on the occasion of Green Week starting 23 June 2009 in Brussels. Green Week is a large annual environment conference held by the European Union (EU) that draws some 3,500 participants from EU institutions, businesses, non-governmental organisations, public administration, and science. This year's motto is "Climate Change - Act and Adapt".

The background paper provides an overview of the latest reforms in the federal government's climate protection policy, analyses possible obstacles to their successful implementation, and makes proposals for their resolution. UBA is calling for bold action in matters of climate protection. Certain means to protect the climate which have not been fully developed-- in the area of energy efficiency measures in housing stock, in the implementation of ecological mobility schemes or lower emissions supply of power and heating, must be promoted. Germany needs an energy system that provides consumers with a high share of renewable energies. The Energy Savings Ordinance (*Energiesparverordnung - EnEV*), which puts caps on the energy consumption of buildings, must be put into action. The technology is in place to reduce the average carbon dioxide emissions of the new automobile fleet to 95 grammes carbon dioxide per kilometre (g CO₂/km) by 2020. This ceiling should therefore become enacted in EU law. The environment is not the only factor that will ultimately gain from such structural change in energy supply and consumption; businesses and private citizens would also make real cuts in energy consumption and costs.

Global greenhouse gas emissions are still on the rise. To avoid unbearable consequences for mankind and the environment we must, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a body of renowned climate researchers, contain the increase in the Earth's temperature to 2 degrees over its pre-industrial level. So as not to exceed this two-degree boundary, every state in the global community must abate its emissions of greenhouse gases

as soon and as quickly as possible. The rise in emissions must be halted by 2020. By 2050 global greenhouse gas emissions may only be half the levels recorded in 1990.

The background paper (in German) *Klimaschutz konkret: Mut zum Handeln* can be downloaded from the Internet at <http://www.umweltdaten.de/publikationen/fpdf-l/3809.pdf>.

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