

Message from Kandeh K. Yumkella, Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

As in previous years, we are celebrating World Environment Day today. This year's theme is "Melting Ice – A Hot Topic?" -- a fitting one given the focus of the United Nations on the effects of climate change on polar ecosystems and communities during the International Polar Year (2007-2008). But the cumulative impacts of climate change are a global issue. While threatening all countries and the lives of their people, developing countries will be the hardest hit, given their paucity of resources, and some have their survival at stake.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the planet's warming and its potential impacts are no longer in doubt and human activities are major contributors to it. Rapid economic growth has often been seen as incompatible with environmental sustainability but UNIDO has long been demonstrating that this is not necessarily the case. Properly planned industrial development has the potential to provide effective solutions to environmental challenges.

Today's continued increase in carbon emissions, in a time of clearly noticeable global warming, shows us that sustainable industrial development is more important than ever. A serious commitment by all nations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to provide support to developing countries in reducing their risk from the impacts of climate change is critical for ensuring future human welfare, social stability, peace and security.

On this year's World Environment Day, let us follow the example of the city of Troms, Norway, and renew our promise to fight climate change for securing our common future.

Kandeh K. Yumkella
Director-General