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PRESS RELEASE

UNFCCC chief sees Kyoto Protocol countries on their way to reach emissions targets

Bonn, [14 February 2006] – According to the acting head of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Richard Kinley, industrialized countries that have ratified the 1997 Kyoto Protocol can still reach their legally binding emissions targets.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, 34 industrialized countries and the EEC are required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 5% below 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012. A total of 160 Parties to the Protocol have now ratified the treaty, which entered into force on 16 February 2005.

Looking ahead to the first anniversary of the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol this week, Richard Kinley said that as a whole, these countries were “on their way to lower their emission levels by at least 3.5% below 1990 levels during the first commitment period”. “With the help of additional measures and the use of Kyoto market-based mechanisms, they will as a group be able to reach their agreed Kyoto reduction targets”, he added.

In addition to the implementation of climate-friendly policies at home, the Kyoto Protocol allows countries to meet their emission targets through the Kyoto mechanisms. For example, the clean development mechanism allows industrialized countries to generate emission credits or allowances through investment in emission reductions projects in developing countries.

“The currently known project potential of the clean development mechanism is estimated to generate over 700 million tonnes of emission reductions by the end of 2012, the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. This is almost as much as the annual greenhouse gas emissions of Canada,” said Christine Zumkeller, Coordinator of the Project-based Mechanisms Programme.

According to reports by industrialized countries submitted to the UNFCCC secretariat at the beginning of 2006, many countries have already made significant progress in putting in place policies and enacting relevant legislative, regulatory and institutional frameworks for achieving their Kyoto commitments.



Some results are already visible. New policies put in place in the 15 countries that were members of the EU at the adoption of the Protocol in 1997 brought the emissions down by 1.7% compared to 1990 levels. This is roughly equivalent to the annual greenhouse gas emissions of Denmark or Bulgaria. Data received from Sweden suggests that without all the climate change policies put in place since 1990, emissions in 2010 would have been 20% higher compared to 1990.

Whilst pointing to these positive developments, UNFCCC acting head Richard Kinley insisted that it was clear that many Parties to the Kyoto Protocol would have to sustain or even intensify their efforts. "Setting these actions in motion will be the success of Kyoto, but more is needed. The implementation of the Protocol will help to drive the technology innovation needed to further bring down emissions".

Note to journalists: For further information, please contact the UNFCCC Press Office: (+49-228) 815-1005 or press@unfccc.int See also <http://unfccc.int>.