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MEDIA ADVISORY

Historic United Nations climate change conference about to start in Montreal

Bonn, 23 November 2005 -- The United Nations Climate Change Conference 2005 will be held from 28 November to 9 December in Montreal, Canada. It is expected to assemble between 8,000 and 10,000 participants, among them government delegates, business and civic leaders and environmental activists. As such, it will be the largest such meeting since the Kyoto Climate Conference in 1997.

The high level of interest is not least due to the fact that the conference is serving as the first ever meeting of the 156 Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP1). At the same time, it is serving as the 11th Conference of the 189 Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Under the Kyoto Protocol, which took effect 16 February 2005, more than 30 industrialized countries are bound by concrete and legally binding emission reduction targets during the period 2008-2012.

"This meeting will not only be one of the largest climate change conferences ever, it will deliver a range of substantive results", said Richard Kinley, acting head of the United Nations Climate Change Secretariat in Bonn, Germany.

At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Montreal, Parties to the Kyoto Protocol are expected to adopt a set of decisions critical to complete the 'rule book' of the Protocol.

Parties are for example expected to agree on steps to strengthen the clean development mechanism, a tool designed under the Protocol to support sustainable development projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries. The United Nations Climate Change Secretariat will be showcasing such projects at the conference.

Montreal will also see the launch of a five year work programme on adaptation. "A certain degree of climate change is no longer avoidable", said Halldor Thorgeirsson, coordinator of the Climate Change Secretariat's Methods, Inventories & Science Programme. "All countries need to adapt to the inevitable impacts. Developing countries will be hardest hit by those impacts and need the necessary assistance."



Another topic high on the agenda is technology, with a special focus on carbon capture and storage. "Technology has to be at the centre of the global response to climate change. This was the basis of the Kyoto Protocol and it will be fundamental to future cooperation", Halldor Thorgeirsson pointed out. "The challenge is getting existing technologies into the market, developing new ones, and ensuring technologies are transferred to developing countries to promote their sustainable development."

At the United Nations Climate Conference in Montreal Parties will also start to shape future steps to protect the world's climate. "The Montreal climate change conference is starting to lay the foundation for future climate policy now that the Kyoto Protocol is in force and implementation is underway", said the UNFCCC's acting head Richard Kinley.

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