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PRESS RELEASE

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Rich countries see higher greenhouse gas emissions

Upward trend set to continue

Bonn, 3 June 2003 – A new report confirms that the developed world, which stabilized its emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases during the 1990s, is likely to see these emissions rise by the end of the current decade.

Based on projections provided by the governments themselves, the report anticipates that the combined emissions of Europe, Japan, the US and other highly industrialized countries could grow by 8% from 2000 to 2010 (to about 17% over the 1990 level) despite domestic measures currently in place to limit them.

At the same time, the so-called transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe are starting to increase their emissions again as their economies recover from their early and mid 1990s nadir. As a result, the developed world as a whole (highly industrialized plus transition countries) will see its emissions increase by 11% from 2000 to 2010 (10% over the 1990 level).

“These findings clearly demonstrate that stronger and more creative policies will be needed for accelerating the spread of climate-friendly technologies and persuading businesses, local governments and citizens to cut their greenhouse gas emissions,” said Joke Waller-Hunter, Executive Secretary of the UN Climate Change Convention.

Developed countries saw their combined emissions actually fall during the 1990s, by 3%, due to a 37% decline in transition country emissions. They thus met the Climate Change Convention’s intermediate aim of keeping the group’s overall emissions at 1990 levels by 2000.

However, greenhouse gas emissions in the highly industrialized countries rose by 8% during that period. The European Union’s total emissions decreased by 3.5% from 1990 to 2000, with individual member States varying between a decrease of 19% and an increase of 35%. Emissions increased in most other highly industrialized countries, including New Zealand (5%), Japan (11%), the US (14%), Australia (18%) and Canada (20%).

Emissions rose in all major economic sectors, including energy, transport, industry and agriculture. The exception was waste management, where emissions declined slightly. The figures do not include emissions and removals from land-use change and forestry.

The report, an official UN document entitled *Compilation and Synthesis of Third National Communications*, will be considered at a two-week meeting of the UN Climate Change Convention’s 190



member governments that formally opens in Bonn tomorrow. Its projections, which are based on data from 2000-2001, can help governments plan their future climate change strategies.

The report finds that governments are adopting a more comprehensive set of policies and measures than they did several years ago for addressing their emissions. Examples include emissions trading, carbon taxes and green certificate trading. The greatest number of policies and measures are being applied to the energy sector.

National governments continue to play a major role in setting the overall climate response strategy. However, local and regional governments are becoming more involved, and there is a greater emphasis on consulting and collaborating with key stakeholders and civil society.

With a very few exceptions, the reporting governments underlined the importance of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol in shaping their domestic climate policy responses. They reiterated that their Kyoto targets are a first step towards long-term and continued emission reductions.

Under the Protocol developed countries are to reduce their average emissions by 5% by the period 2008-2012 (although Australia and the US, citing concerns over economic impacts, have withdrawn from the agreement). The Protocol will enter into force 90 days after it has been ratified by the Russian Federation.

The report's usefulness has been greatly improved by the growing rigor of the underlying national reports, called national communications. One hundred initial national communications from developing countries and 31 third national communications from developed countries have been submitted so far. The reporting of annual greenhouse gas inventories by developed countries has improved in quantity, quality and timeliness.

In addition to this report, the agenda of the Bonn meeting also foresees negotiations on modalities for including forestry projects in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the Kyoto Protocol. The CDM is a tool for promoting sustainable development by enabling industrialized countries to finance emission-reduction projects in developing countries and, by doing so, receive credits that they can use to meet their targets under the Kyoto Protocol.

Issues regarding forestry projects in the CDM are technically complex and subject to intense debate. They include how one can safeguard against the risk that greenhouse gases initially absorbed by a forestry project could later be released (e.g. by fire) and how negative socio-economic and environmental impacts of such projects can be avoided. A decision on this issue is expected to be taken at the next session of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Milan from 1-12 December 2003.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the Executive Board of the CDM will hold its ninth meeting on 7-8 June. The Board will, for the first time, consider methodologies needed for evaluating and monitoring CDM projects. If such methodologies are approved, the first CDM projects could be registered during the third quarter of 2003. The results of the ninth CDM Executive Board meeting will be presented at an event on Monday, 9 June, at the Maritim Hotel.

During the next two weeks, a number of informal workshops and presentations organized by intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations will be conducted at the venue. A full list of these informal side events is available at unfccc.int.

Note to journalists: The 18th Sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies to the Climate Change Convention (SB 18) will take place at the Maritim Hotel, Bonn, 4-13 June 2003 preceded by a number of pre-session events. The report, *National Communications from Parties included in Annex I to the Convention: Compilation and Synthesis of Third National Communications*, is available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2003/sbi/07.pdf>. For accreditation and other information, please contact Michel Smitall +49 (0)160 909 33 608.