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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Build 21<sup>st</sup> century economies by cutting greenhouse gases, urges outgoing UN climate chief**

Bonn/New York, 30 January 2002 – Marking the end of 11 years as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Michael Zammit Cutajar has called on governments to focus on the long-term benefits of creating climate-friendly economies.

“It would be naïve to ask governments to put their perceived economic interests aside. I hope, however, that a better appreciation of the costs of inaction and the economic benefits of innovation in technologies and lifestyles will generate a more balanced economic vision,” he said.

Mr. Zammit Cutajar’s departure comes at the end of a three-year cycle of talks that started soon after the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in Japan in 1997.

A package deal permitting governments to move ahead with ratifying the Protocol was finalized at major conferences during the past few months in Bonn and Marrakesh. In addition, the Marrakesh Ministerial Declaration was adopted as an input into next September’s World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

“The Climate Change Convention is not about conservation and pollution abatement in the usual sense of those terms,” said Mr. Zammit Cutajar. “It is about the transformations that will bring about greater efficiency in the use of resources and greater equity in access to them. It is not a convention on the global environment, it is a convention on the sustainable development of the global economy.”

Mr. Zammit Cutajar has received tributes from around the world for his leadership of the Climate Change secretariat, including from government ministers and officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and his UN peers. The Marrakesh conference also adopted a resolution of gratitude.

A native of Malta, Mr. Zammit Cutajar became Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change in early 1991. He was appointed head of the permanent Convention secretariat by the UN Secretary-General in 1995.

“For the past decade, Michael has helped to guide the climate change process with great acumen and built up an effective and respected secretariat team in Bonn,” said UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. “His leadership will be sorely missed, but I have no doubt that he will remain an articulate voice on this and related issues – and I trust that, since 2001 was the second hottest of the last 140 years, he will not be shy about speaking out in 2002.”

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Two weeks ago, Mr. Annan appointed Ms. Joke Waller-Hunter as the Convention's new Executive Secretary. Ms. Waller-Hunter is an experienced international civil servant, having directed the Division for Sustainable Development at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and led the Environment Directorate of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris.

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For « **The Marrakesh Ministerial Declaration** », Input to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (9 November 2001), refer to Document FCCC/CP/2001/L.27/Rev.1, available on the UNFCCC website under the following URL: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/cop7/127r01.pdf>

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