



FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE – Secretariat

CONVENTION - CADRE SUR LES CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES - Secrétariat

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## PRESS RELEASE

### Ministers pledge to finalize climate agreement by November 2000

Bonn, 5 November 1999 – Ministers and officials from 166 governments are concluding two weeks of climate change talks here after setting an aggressive timetable for completing the outstanding details of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol by November 2000, thus triggering its early ratification by governments.

They also adopted a decision empowering the conference President, Jan Szyszko, to take all necessary steps to intensify the negotiating process on all issues during the coming year.

In a further display of support for rapid action, many countries echoed the call by German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in his opening address for governments to ratify the Protocol quickly so that it can enter into force by 2002 – ten years after the Climate Change Convention was signed at the Rio Earth Summit.

“The Bonn climate change conference has confirmed that there is still enormous political support for achieving the Kyoto target of cutting greenhouse gas emissions in industrialized countries by 5% by the period 2008-12,” said Mr. Szyszko, who is Secretary of State for Climate Change and Plenipotentiary of Poland. “The conference has also set us on a good course for finalizing the many rules and mechanisms required for making the Protocol operational.”

The deadline for completing the Protocol is the Sixth Session of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention (COP 6), which has been set for 13 – 24 November 2000 in The Hague. The Hague conference will be preceded by two one-week rounds of talks in the COP’s two subsidiary bodies, from 12 – 16 June and from 11 – 15 September; each session will be preceded by one week of informal talks and workshops.

“The political atmospherics were good – better than expected,” said Michael Zammit Cutajar, Executive Secretary of the Convention. “The engagement of ministers made a difference, and there were some encouraging technical decisions. Now we face our own Y2K (Year 2000) challenge: how to work out a deal on the core policy issues at The Hague conference that will advance the implementation of the Convention and make the Protocol ratifiable.”

Having a Protocol that is both fully operational and in force is essential for ensuring greater emissions reductions by industrialized countries. The Protocol will only enter into force and become legally binding when at least 55 countries, including developed countries accounting for at least 55% of developed country emissions, have ratified. So far, only 16 countries – all from the developing world – have ratified. Eighty-three countries plus the European Union have taken the initial step of adding their signature to the agreement.

The agenda of the Bonn conference was based on the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, adopted last year at COP 4. The Plan addresses a number of issues for advancing work under the 1992 Convention and finalizing the rulebook of the Protocol. The results are to be adopted in The Hague.

A number of decisions coming out of Bonn settled important substantive issues. Agreement was reached on how to improve the rigor of national reports from industrialized countries and strengthen the guidelines for measuring their greenhouse gas emissions. Action was also taken to address bottlenecks in the delivery and consideration of national communications by developing countries (although 22 developing countries have already submitted their communications).

Other decisions establish the process negotiators will follow over the coming 12 months. They will make it possible to finalize regimes for non-compliance, capacity building, emissions trading, joint implementation, and a Clean Development Mechanism. They also point the way forward for determining how to address adverse affects on developing countries and how to account for net emissions from forests (which can act as carbon “sinks”).

The Bonn conference, or COP 5, was attended by over 4,000 participants, including over 60 ministers. In addition to delivering over 100 formal statements during a high-level segment, ministers and heads of delegations participated in an informal public discussion. Meanwhile, on the sidelines of the negotiations, governments and organizations held 135 workshops and seminars on various aspects of climate change.

**Note to journalists:** Video records of the conference as well as documents and other information are available via the Internet at <http://www.unfccc.de>. For interviews or additional information please contact Michael Williams at (+41-22) 917 8242/44, fax (+41-22) 797 3464, e-mail [mwilliams@unep.ch](mailto:mwilliams@unep.ch).