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PRESS RELEASE

UN Climate Change Negotiations Speed up in Accra

(Accra, 27 August 2008) – The latest round of UN-sponsored global Climate Change Talks in Accra, Ghana concluded Wednesday with clear signals that the pace of negotiations to get to a deal on long-term strengthened international action on climate change is picking up. Important progress was made in Accra on a number of key issues for the deal, to be clinched at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009. Furthermore, Parties under the Kyoto Protocol advanced their work on the tools and rules available to developed countries to set ambitious reduction targets beyond 2012.

“This has been a very important and encouraging meeting”, said Yvo de Boer, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). “We are still on track, the process has speeded up and governments are very serious about negotiating a result in Copenhagen.”

The meeting in Accra constituted the third major UNFCCC negotiating session this year and was the last meeting in the run up to this year’s UN Climate Change Conference in Poznań, Poland, 1 to 12 December. Around 1,600 participants, including government delegates from 160 countries and representatives from environmental organizations, business and industry and research institutions, attended the one-week meeting in Accra.

“The highlight of this session is that governments have agreed to compile different proposals for solutions in a structured way for discussion at the next landmark meeting in Poznan,” the UN’s top climate change official said. “So Accra has laid the foundation of what could serve as a first negotiating text for a Copenhagen deal,” he added.

In a working group on long-term cooperative action under the UNFCCC, discussions took place on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries. “Countries have made it very clear that issue of forests need to be part of a Copenhagen deal,” de Boer said. “That’s important because emissions from deforestation account for 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions.”

A second workshop provided more clarity on so-called “sectoral approaches” through which countries can address emissions from a whole sector of their economy. Countries meeting in Ghana emphasized that such approaches should not lead to binding commitments for developing countries and that is up to a country to decide if it want to put sectoral policies in place or not.

For the first time at a UNFCCC gathering, governments discussed what is needed both in terms of financing and technology to step up action on both reducing greenhouse gas emissions



and adapting to the impacts of climate change. "Parties were deeply committed and submitted proposals for solutions on the issues", said Luiz Figueiredo Machado, Chair of the Ad hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action under the Convention. These proposals will now be assembled and submitted to the meeting in Poznan.

The working group under the Kyoto Protocol made good progress in the talks on the tools and rules that developed countries will have at their disposal to meet ambitious reduction targets after 2012.

Governments put together a clear list of options to improve the efficiency of clean development mechanism (CDM) and emissions trading and their contribution to sustainable development. "All in all the group has made good progress. It's important to take this progress forward in Poznań when we return to the issue of the ranges of emissions reductions for developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol," said Harald Dovland, the Chair of Ad hoc Working Group on further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol.

Under the CDM, projects in developing countries can receive saleable certified emission reduction credits by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. These credits can be used by industrialized countries to cover a portion their emission-reduction commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

"One of the CDM's shortcomings is that it is not leading to enough investments in Africa," said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer. "There is a real risk of Africa becoming the forgotten continent in the context of the fight against climate change unless we manage to design a regime going into the future that take into account in a much more comprehensive way what Africa's specific needs are not only on adaptation, but also on fuelling clean economic growth," he added.

At the Africa Carbon Forum in Dakar from 3 to 5 September, African countries will discuss what can be done to improve the CDM. The Forum is the first event of its kind to be held on the African continent and will include a carbon investment trade fair, conference and policy meeting.

About the UNFCCC

With 192 Parties, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has to date 182 member Parties. Under the Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialized countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments. The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

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