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PRESS RELEASE

Montreal climate conference begins with calls for action

Montreal, [28 November 2005] – The United Nations Climate Change Conference began today in Montreal with strong calls for action on the part of the conference's President, Canadian Environment Minister Stéphane Dion, and the United Nations Climate Change Secretariat.

The opening saw the launch of the first ever meeting of the 157 Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP1). At the same time, it was the opening of the 11th Conference of the 189 Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 11).

"Governments are acting decisively to fully implement the Climate Change Convention and are determined to meet their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. We need to improve on current efforts to limit emissions and to look at innovative ways in which people can work together to protect the climate for the future," President Stéphane Dion said. "In my discussions with countries from around the world over the past eight months, it has become clear that there is a growing sense of the need for action. Individual citizens and their governments have underlined their concerns about rising energy prices, energy security, and the growing scientific evidence of the impact of climate change."

"All sectors of society can play a role in support of the work of national governments," Mr. Dion said. "The Montreal conference will be attended by thousands of delegates as well as observers from environmental groups, scientific organizations, the business community and representatives of municipal, provincial and state governments. They will discuss ways to raise awareness of the urgency for action, share best practices on reducing the causes of climate change, explore new business opportunities from sustainable technologies, and consider how to better prepare for the devastating impacts of climate change on human security, infrastructure, and natural resources."

Richard Kinley, acting head of the UN Climate Change Secretariat in Bonn, Germany, called on governments to give the 1997 Kyoto Protocol the necessary backing to generate more investment in climate-friendly technology. "The launch of the carbon market has provided effective incentive to the private sector and governments at all levels to reduce their environmental footprint," said Mr. Kinley. "The Montreal conference will help solidify those opportunities."

Alluding to the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol in February 2005 he said. "It is a pleasure to celebrate the fact that the Protocol is up and running. What we will now do in Montreal is to formally adopt the decisions contained in the Marrakesh accords -- the Protocol's 'rule book' -- after many years of hard work."



During the high-level segment, beginning Wednesday next week, the gathering will assemble around 100 ministers. The high-level segment will be opened by the Prime Minister of Canada, Paul Martin, and the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Fréchette.

"The Montreal conference is going to be very big, and it will also be very busy. The agendas are crowded and, the good news is, we are expecting concrete and important results. The world has come to Montreal to make a difference." Richard Kinley pointed out.

The UNFCCC secretariat and Canada as host country have continued the UNFCCC tradition of openness by making the proceedings of the conference and parallel events available around the world through web-casting and special presentations to the public.

Note to journalists:

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