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FYI...

TO: Interested Climate Change media
FROM: Glenn Kelly, Global Climate Coalition
RE: COP 5 Preview for Media
DATE: October 20, 1999

Please join GCC Chair Connie Holmes and myself to discuss our goals and objectives for COP 5 on Thursday at 10:00 a.m.

While reports say negotiators will not discuss areas of disagreement, we continue to urge U.S. and international negotiators not to wait until the last minute.

At COP-6 next year, the Protocol's details are to be finalized. Major differences remain regarding emissions trading flexibility and other mechanisms, increased roles for carbon sinks and developing country participation. We must get the debate on these controversial issues moving forward or we risk facing 11th hour decisions that are likely not to be well received by the American public.

WHAT: A Preview of COP-5 UN climate meetings in Bonn, Germany

WHO: GCC Executive Director Glenn Kelly, Chair Connie Holmes

WHEN: Thursday, October 21st, 10:00 a.m.

WHERE: 1-888-379-9246 Code: 235 009

If you have any questions, please contact us at 202/628-3622. I have included a brief preview of the COP 5 issues for your information. We hope you can join us Thursday.



COP 5 Preview

International efforts to tackle the problem of global climate change will continue at a major United Nations conference in Bonn, Germany from October 25 to November 5, with 5,000 participants from 150 countries are expected to attend.

Ministers and senior government officials face a full agenda of political and technical issues that will determine how the international community will address greenhouse gases emissions over the critical first decade of the 21st century. With time growing short before the final negotiating session in late 2000 or early 2001, important and controversial decisions must be made before the 11th hour debating begins.

Developed countries are deeply concerned about the economic implications of this rapid transition to a lower-emissions economy. These concerns include the potential impact on trade competitiveness, both among themselves and those developing countries that are now industrializing. The Kyoto 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 14 countries — all from the developing world — have ratified the Protocol.

The current negotiations will:

- 1) Attempt to define the rules by which developed countries could lower the costs of meeting their targets by reducing emissions in other countries through the so-called flexibility mechanisms.
- 2) Determine the consequences for a country of failing to comply with the Protocol targets.
- 3) Open the way for key developing countries to become more involved in addressing climate change in the future.

The negotiations are scheduled to conclude at the next major conference, to be held in The Hague, The Netherlands, possibly in November 2000.

The Protocol's three flexibility mechanisms still need to be made fully operational. Priority will be given to finalizing the clean development mechanism (CDM). The CDM will promote sustainable development by encouraging investments in developing-country projects that use clean technologies. Developed countries will receive credit against their targets for emissions avoided by these projects. A levy on the CDM will fund projects that help countries to adapt to future climate change impacts.

A joint implementation (JI) program will offer credits for contributing to projects in other developed countries (including the countries of Central/Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union). An international emissions trading regime will allow developed countries to buy and sell emissions credits amongst themselves.

The Parties must elaborate the nature and scope of these mechanisms, the criteria for project eligibility, baselines for measuring a project's contribution to reducing emissions, the roles of various institutions, and an accounting system for allocating credits. The environmental credibility of the Protocol will be strongly influenced by these details.

In addition, credibility demands that there be procedures regarding compliance with the emissions targets; this is a difficult issue and, in the case of legally binding consequences for non-compliance, would eventually require an amendment to the Protocol.

Also essential is an agreement on how to measure and account for emissions cuts. There is a need for more rigorous criteria and national systems for estimating net emissions and for reporting and reviewing progress. Of particular importance is the technically complex and politically charged question of how to estimate the removal and storage of carbon from the atmosphere by forests and other natural "sinks". By clearly defining what counts as a sink, and thus how much sink enhancement can contribute to meeting a country's emissions target, these discussions, too, could have an important impact on the costs of meeting the targets.

The contributions of key developing countries addressing climate change will be vital toward progress. Under the Convention, developing countries are to gather and analyze national data; incorporate climate change concerns into national planning, and submit information about all this activity for consideration by the international community.

Considering that by 2015, developing countries will soon surpass the Annex I countries in emissions, participation from "key" developing countries, such as China, India, Mexico, Brazil and others is essential. Annex I countries must encourage technology transfer and financial assistance, but developing countries must not be exempt.

The Bonn conference is known formally as the Fifth Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 5) of the United Nations Framework Convention Climate Change (UNFCCC). The COP will open on 25 October and then resume on 2 November. The interim days of the conference will be taken up by the 11th meetings of the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and its Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI). A 48-hour high-level segment for ministers and heads of delegation will take place from 2 - 4 November.