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**Big, Fast, Cheap Climate Opportunity Within Reach  
IGSD Testifies Before European Parliament on Climate Mitigation Potential of Ozone Treaty,  
Benefits of Reducing Black Carbon and Tropospheric Ozone**

Brussels, Belgium, March 18, 2011 – The world has a significant climate opportunity within its grasp that can bring fast results at low-cost, according to IGSD President, Durwood Zaelke, who yesterday addressed the European Parliament’s Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI). Using the Montreal Protocol ozone treaty to phase down production and use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) – potent greenhouse gases used in refrigeration, air conditioning, and foam-blowing applications for insulation – could result in mitigation of 100 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent by 2050, at a cost of 5-10 cents per tonne.

“The Montreal Protocol is the best environmental treaty the world has ever created,” said Zaelke. “At the same time that it has put the ozone layer back on the path to recovery, it has also done for us more climate mitigation than any other treaty. The ozone effort has solved an amount of the climate problem... that would otherwise be equal to CO<sub>2</sub> today.”

Members of the ENVI Committee expressed their support for the Montreal strategy to reduce HFCs and several strongly emphasized the need for Europe to step up and do more. As one member noted:

“When we have an option that costs four or five cents, or 20 cents, and we are paying 14 [dollars], we should act more diligently... We should step up our action and initiative. This does not only save the planet, it saves money as well.”

HFCs are just one group of climate pollutants that contribute to the other half of climate warming – the “non-CO<sub>2</sub>” side. Zaelke explained that while CO<sub>2</sub> is responsible for about 50 percent of the climate problem and emphasized the importance of aggressive mitigation, this will not be enough to avoid significant climate impacts as large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> persist in the atmosphere for millenia. In contrast, non-CO<sub>2</sub> climate gases and pollutants – including most HFCs – stay in the atmosphere for much shorter periods of time, from days to several decades. This means fast action translates to fast results.

“We need complementary non-CO<sub>2</sub> actions that we take quickly. Speed matters tremendously when we’re already into this dangerous territory and bumping up against the guardrail of the abrupt climate changes,” said Zaelke.

Black carbon soot and tropospheric ozone are also significant short-term climate forcers that can be addressed now. Zaelke referenced the recent assessment by the UN Environment Programme and World Meteorological Organization that calculates the world could stay below 2°C for an additional 60 years if aggressive measures to reduce black carbon and tropospheric ozone (including methane emissions which help form tropospheric ozone) are implemented alongside CO<sub>2</sub> measures. Besides benefiting climate, cutting black carbon and tropospheric ozone will save millions of lives and avoid billions of dollars in crop damage. An important point to remember, said Zaelke, is that these are local air pollutants that can be addressed through laws, institutions, and technologies that already exist.

The case is similar for HFCs: the Montreal Protocol is an existing, effective institution, and many alternatives for HFCs are available or on their way to market.

Zaelke closed his remarks by pointing out the important role that Europe can play in moving this issue forward: “Europe has a moral authority on climate change that much of the rest of the world lacks.” While many countries support action on HFCs under Montreal, to build additional momentum Zaelke suggested that Europe might consider submitting its own HFC phase-down proposal this year (following in the footsteps of Micronesia and the North American countries last year) and consider contributing additional financing to assist developing countries transition to ozone- and climate-friendly alternatives.

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The broadcast of the March 17, 2011 European Parliament ENVI Committee discussion with Durwood Zaelke on HFCs and the Montreal Protocol is available here (minutes 15:18:33 - 16:09:21):

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/wps-europarl-internet/frd/vod/player?eventCode=20110317-1500-COMMITTEE->

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