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### **Vulnerable Island Nation Calls for Fast Climate Cuts under Ozone Treaty**

Washington, DC, May 11, 2011 – Facing sea level rise of up to 5 feet by the end of the century, the low-lying vulnerable island nation of Micronesia is calling on the Parties to the Montreal Protocol ozone treaty to capture the single biggest climate mitigation prize available to the world today by agreeing to phase down hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), a group of super greenhouse gases that can have hundreds to thousands the warming potential of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>).

The climate benefit of the island's strategy would be up to 100 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent before 2050. This compares to the 5 to 10 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent that the Kyoto Protocol is striving to achieve during its first commitment period. The cost could be as little as US \$0.10 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent in public funds.

“Climate change impacts have become so clear and so close now, that we need fast, aggressive mitigation if we hope to avoid the worst consequences,” said Durwood Zaelke, President of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development. “This courageous island is stepping up to the plate on behalf of all vulnerable nations with the best plan to slow climate change. Without cuts in CO<sub>2</sub>, mitigation under Montreal won't be enough, but without this fast-action strategy, Micronesians and many others in low-lying areas will face the loss of their countries.”

Micronesia submitted their proposal this week to the Montreal Protocol Secretariat as the first step in convincing the other 195 Parties to agree to an amendment that would start cutting production and consumption of HFCs. The United States, Canada, and Mexico, which had supported action on HFCs under the Montreal Protocol last year, also re-submitted a similar joint proposal for 2011.

An amendment to the Protocol would present developing country Parties with the opportunity to leapfrog the potent HFC greenhouse gas altogether and transition into ozone- and climate-friendly alternatives. HFCs are the current ozone-friendly substitutes for HCFCs, which both warm the planet and damage the ozone layer. They are mainly used as coolants in refrigeration and air conditioning systems and in foam-blowing applications for insulation.

Over 90 nations have followed Micronesia's lead in calling for HCFCs to be replaced with chemicals that have a low impact on global warming. Phasing out the production and use of HFCs and transitioning to many of the more climate-friendly HCFC-alternatives already

available will prevent the enormous growth in HFCs otherwise expected by 2050.

“Solving one problem while exacerbating another is not acceptable,” said Zaelke. “As we finally begin to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, we cannot at the same time allow the equivalent of over 100 billion tons of carbon dioxide to be manufactured and released into the atmosphere.”

Micronesia has a history of success at bringing about effective climate mitigation under the Montreal Protocol.

In 2007, the Montreal Protocol Parties agreed to an historic Micronesia-proposed decision to accelerate the phase-out of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs). Since then, support for phasing down the substitute HFCs under the Montreal Protocol has been steadily increasing, with the largest group of NGOs calling for doing so at last month’s UNFCCC climate talks in Bangkok, Thailand.

Initial discussions on the two proposals will take place at the Montreal Protocol’s Open-Ended Working Group meeting August 1-5, in Bangkok; final decisions will be taken at the Meeting of the Parties November 14-18, in Bali.

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The proposal documents submitted by Micronesia and the North American Parties can be found under “May 2011” on the Montreal Protocol Secretariat website: <http://ozone.unep.org/highlights.shtml>

The Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development’s mission is to promote just and sustainable societies and to protect the environment by advancing the understanding, development and implementation of effective, accountable and democratic systems of governance for sustainable development.

Beginning in 2006, the Institute embarked on a “fast-action” climate mitigation campaign to promote non-CO<sub>2</sub> strategies that will result in significant emissions reductions in the near-term, to complement cuts in CO<sub>2</sub> which are essential for the long-term. These strategies include reducing emissions of local air pollutants such as black carbon, methane, and tropospheric ozone; mitigation of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) through the Montreal Protocol ozone treaty; and carbon-negative measures such as biosequestration through expanded biochar production.

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