



## **‘Fast-Action’ Measures Are Needed in Addition to Cuts in CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions**

Copenhagen, March 12, 2009 – The need for urgent action has been emerging as a primary theme of the Copenhagen Climate Congress this week—including urgent action on mitigation strategies that complement aggressive cuts in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. “Everyone must understand the urgency of this matter and the potential costs,” Danish Minister of Climate and Energy Connie Hedegaard said in her opening remarks. “We must take immediate action to keep global warming below 2°C.” Doing so, said UK Special Representative for Climate Change John Ashton, may require a “mobilization of effort that is usually only seen in war time.”

IPCC Chairman Dr. R.K. Pachauri echoed the need for urgency, reminding the attendees that the Fourth Assessment Reports make it clear that “warming of the climate system is unequivocal.” Dr. Pachauri also noted that “climate change is not a smooth linear increase in temperature alone.” Non-linear, abrupt climate change is also a serious risk. As one example, Professor Stefan Rahmstorf of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research warned that “we are setting in motion processes where sea-level will rise for centuries.”

To forestall such impacts in the near-term, actions that provide rapid climate mitigation are critical. Cuts in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, while essential, are not sufficient, as they cannot reduce temperatures for at least 1,000 years. Only fast-action climate strategies can forestall or prevent committed warming and the impacts that are already “in the pipeline” due to past and present emissions.

Fast-action strategies include reducing black carbon, or soot, the climate benefits of which are almost immediate because soot only lasts in the atmosphere for a few days. John Van Aardenne of the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre recommended coordinating air pollution and climate regulations for best overall results, with a “focus especially on black carbon, tropospheric ozone and methane.” Because the technologies already exist and the emissions reductions benefits are rapid as compared to reductions of CO<sub>2</sub>, “methane, tropospheric ozone and soot have much larger contributions you can get at” in the near term, said Michael MacCracken, Chief Scientist for Climate Change Programs at the Climate Institute.

Former IPCC lead author Ole John Nielson of the University of Copenhagen also emphasized short-lived climate forcers as a key target of climate policies. As did NASA’s James Hansen, who said that “if you want to preserve the ice in the Arctic, these short-lived forcers are a good target.” Hansen said that policy should “emphasize BC reductions among aerosols.” In addition, Nielson commented on the success of the Montreal Protocol. Not only has this treaty quickly reduced ozone-depleting substances, but it has also provided extraordinary climate benefits, Nielson noted, having already offered more than six times the climate mitigation of the first

first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. Because of its effectiveness and speed, Nielson stated, “the Montreal Protocol would be a good model for COP-15.”

“The science presented at the Copenhagen congress clearly shows that the climate change situation is quickly moving from bad to worse, and time is running out,” said Durwood Zaelke, President of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development. “These fast-action strategies are essential to avoiding abrupt climate change, and need to be considered in addition to measures to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.”

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