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PRESS RELEASE

International emissions offsetting under Kyoto Protocol has critical role in response to climate change, says new Chair of CDM Executive Board

(Bonn, 11 February 2009) – Combating climate change requires action on all fronts and in all countries, which underscores the need to scale up and enhance innovative initiatives like the clean development mechanism (CDM), said Lex de Jonge in assuming the Chair of the CDM Executive Board.

“The CDM is stimulating investment in green growth in developing countries, engaging the private sector in climate change action, and giving countries some flexibility in how they meet their emission reduction targets. It’s time to scale up and enhance the mechanism to release its full potential,” Mr. de Jonge said.

Under the CDM, projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries can earn saleable certified emissions reduction (CER) credits. These CERs can be used by countries with an emission reduction or limitation commitment under the Kyoto Protocol to meet a part of that commitment.

When they met in Poland this past December, Parties to the Kyoto Protocol took decisions aimed at streamlining and speeding up the CDM. As well, Parties asked the CDM Executive Board to explore procedures and methodologies that would enhance regional and sub-regional distribution of projects.

“The CDM has suffered from its own success – the number of projects that have come forward for vetting and approval is well above what was envisaged by countries when they designed and launched the mechanism. The result is that the Board spends a great deal of its time focused on ensuring the environmental quality of individual projects, and too little time is left to consider enhancements that might scale up the mechanism, speed up the regulatory process, and extend the mechanism’s reach to more developing countries,” Mr. de Jonge said.

“My focus during my one-year term will be to ensure that the Board devotes time to policy discussions aimed at improving procedures that will increase efficiency and broaden the reach of the mechanism. To do that we’ll need to look at improving the timely and efficient processing of the enormous workload before the Board,” he said.

The Executive Board took an important step in 2007 to increase the number and regional distribution of CDM projects when it approved procedures and guidelines for a programme of activities (PoA). Under PoA, many projects, over a wide area, can be registered under a single



programme umbrella, thus reducing regulatory drag without reducing environmental integrity. All emission reductions claimed under CDM must be real, measurable, verifiable and additional to what would have occurred without the project. Eight PoAs have begun the regulatory screening process, involving accredited third-party certifiers, but none has yet been put forward to the Board for registration.

“The PoA approach is an example of untapped potential. With some focused attention by the Board, I think we can develop and provide to potential project developers any lacking procedural clarity that might be blocking progress,” Mr. de Jonge said.

Mr. de Jonge, who has served on the Executive Board since 2006, is head of the CDM Division of the Directorate for International Affairs in the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, the Netherlands. He has taken over the Chair from Rajesh Kumar Sethi.

The Executive Board regulates the CDM, guided by the Parties that ratified the Kyoto Protocol and supported by the UNFCCC secretariat. The Board meets eight times each year, usually in Bonn. Its first meeting in 2009, which opened formally today, is scheduled to conclude on Friday.

About the UNFCCC

With 192 Parties, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has to date 184 member Parties. Under the Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialized countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments. The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

About the CDM

There are currently 1390 registered CDM projects in 53 developing countries, and about another 3000 projects in the project registration pipeline. The CDM is expected to generate more than 2.9 billion CERs by the time the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol ends in 2012, each equivalent to one tonne of carbon dioxide.

Note to journalists

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See also <<http://cdm.unfccc.int>>.