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INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Business calls on governments to reach climate change agreement

Geneva, 4 September 2009

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the World Energy Council (WEC) today called on government leaders to reach a climate change agreement in Copenhagen during final negotiations there in December on a post 2012 framework.

The three organizations issued the call during the World Climate Conference (WCC-3) in Geneva, which brought together high-level policy-makers, scientists, climate service providers, global business leaders and decision-makers from more than 150 countries. The week-long meeting, organized by the World Meteorological Organization, sought to help nations cope with climate change by improving the way climate information is collected and shared among governments. The private sector was represented by ICC, WBCSD and WEC.

"This is a crucial year," said Laurent Corbier, Chair, ICC Commission on Environment and Energy. "The private sector urges government leaders to reach an agreement in Copenhagen on a post 2012 framework to provide business with a clear, predictable framework to stimulate investment in technologies that will enable a transition to a low carbon economy." Mr Corbier added that the WCC-3 was a stepping stone in this process, helping to raise awareness and provide momentum to develop climate related services which can assist governments and businesses in making better decisions.

On Wednesday, business experts and leaders from intergovernmental organizations met during the Business and Industry Forum to discuss how companies can develop durable solutions to the climate challenge.

Jacqueline Coté, ICC Special Representative in Geneva, opened the Forum saying that business is part of the solution and very much engaged in the fight against climate change. "Many companies have already made major changes in how they operate by introducing energy efficient processes or new products and services that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions," she said.

Juan Carlos Castilla-Rubio, Managing Director, Climate Change Innovation Group, Cisco, highlighted that complexity and uncertainty are hallmarks of the early 21st century, as recent developments in the global financial markets demonstrate all too vividly.

"Responses to the financial crisis have featured demands for global coordination. Our economic woes, however, are dwarfed by the increasing threats of climate change, environmental degradation and a resource crunch," said Mr Castilla-Rubio. "Unprecedented global coordination and collaboration of the private sector with the public and people sectors are the only way to address these challenges."

Jean-Yves Caneill, Sustainable Development Project Manager, Electricité du France (EDF) provided tangible examples of how EDF took a very early lead role by utilizing climate services to determine their exposure to climate variability. "We have learned how best to use weather and climate data information in our business," Mr. Caneill said. "Surviving extreme events like storms, droughts and heat waves over the past years has taught us that resilience is a fundamental skill we must have if we want to prosper and/or survive as a company."

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Juan Gonzalez-Valero, Head of Corporate Responsibility, Syngenta, stated: "Better climate information helps business to focus our research and make the right long-term investments." He added: "If you think growing enough crops to feed the world won't be impacted by climate, you're dreaming. And developing crops which are adapted to a changing climate is a long term process." Furthermore, Mr Gonzalez said that "climate change impacts in agriculture are mainly felt through water availability. They have huge economic consequences as well. In 2006-2007, about USD 30 billion worth of crops was lost due to drought."

Mr Gonzalez also represented the private sector Wednesday in a separate working panel on Climate Change and Food Security. "Syngenta is working on understanding the response mechanism in plants that can enable them to better resist drought and other hardships," he said "We need to account for the embedded value of water within our crops."

During the Forum, Christophe Nuttall, Director, Hub for Innovative Partnerships, United Nations Development Programme, demonstrated how important partnerships are in the fight against climate change. Mr Nuttall highlighted the Territorial Approach to Climate Change (TACC), an innovative partnership model that brings together key stakeholders, including sub-national actors, to find innovative solutions to climate change. "100 % of adaptation policies will happen at the subnational level; indeed regional and local authorities are the real movers and shakers," said Mr Nuttall. "Through the TACC, the UN is partnering with regional and local actors, and is now seeking to enhance its engagement with the private sector through organizations such as WBCSD and ICC."

ICC, WBCSD and WEC will continue to work together on the road towards Copenhagen, bringing a wide range of business voices and expertise to help solve the climate challenge.

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About ICC

The International Chamber of Commerce is the largest, most representative business organization in the world. Its hundreds of thousands of member companies in over 130 countries have interests spanning every sector of private enterprise.

A world network of national committees keeps the ICC International Secretariat in Paris informed about national and regional business priorities. More than 2,000 experts drawn from ICC's member companies feed their knowledge and experience into crafting the ICC stance on specific business issues.

The United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and many other intergovernmental bodies, both international and regional, are kept in touch with the views of international business through ICC.

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