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MEDIA ADVISORY

Experts Pessimistic about Upcoming Kyoto Protocol Meeting in The Hague

A global survey shows experts to be extremely pessimistic about the upcoming international negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol, the treaty to combat global climate change. Experts believe that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is, by far, the most urgent Rio convention to bring to the implementation phase, but they are not at all confident about the future of its legal embodiment, the Kyoto Protocol. Only slightly over half of experts surveyed predict that the Kyoto Protocol itself will survive the negotiations scheduled to take place at the Sixth Conference of the Parties (COP6) in The Hague beginning November 13.

The survey, carried out by Environics International of Toronto, asked environment and sustainable development experts for their views on international environmental negotiations to combat climate change. According to Rob Kerr, who directed the survey, "These findings should serve as a wakeup call to governments about Kyoto. It is time to deliver breakthroughs in negotiations or risk losing the Protocol."

The high level of pessimism is born out by other findings in the survey. For example, only 5 percent of experts predict that less industrialized countries, currently not required to cut emissions, will make greenhouse reduction commitments that satisfy the demands of the developed countries that have reduction targets. Meaningful participation by the less industrialized countries is key to US senate ratification.

Also ominous is the finding that only four in ten experts predict that Kyoto Protocol negotiators will agree to the use of carbon-absorbing activities (e.g., tree-planting) as an offset to carbon emissions. Being able to use so-called "carbon sinks" is a critical negotiating point for several important countries with large land surfaces and forest, such as the US, Canada and Australia.

The findings are based on Environics International's GlobeScan survey of 200 environment and sustainable development experts across mainly OECD countries. The survey was carried out on-line and by fax from October 1-31, 2000.

For further information, please contact:
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Background Information for Media Advisory

GlobeScan Panel

The GlobeScan panel is made up of sustainable development experts across mainly OECD countries. The panel represents all sectors, including multilateral organizations, government ministries, corporations and industry groups, environmental consultancies, journalism, and academe, as well as major policy institutes and environmental organizations.

Survey Question

The findings in the media advisory are based on responses to the following question that was asked to the GlobeScan panel:

“The Sixth Conference of the Parties (COP6) meeting regarding The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will take place in The Hague in November 2000. Please rate the likelihood of each of the following outcomes from the COP6 meeting.” *Please use the 5-point scale provided (where 1 is “not at all likely” and 5 is “very likely”).*

- Parties agree to the use of carbon-absorbing activities (e.g., tree-planting) as an offset to carbon emissions.
- Non-Annex I (i.e., less industrialized) countries make greenhouse gas reduction commitments that satisfy Annex I countries.
- A compliance regime with binding consequences is basically agreed upon.
- The parties agree to compensate OPEC countries for diminished future revenues from fossil fuels.
- The parties agree to principles and rules for international emissions trading.
- The parties agree to principles and rules for the Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation.
- The parties agree that nuclear power is acceptable as a climate protection technology.
- Progress on negotiations in COP6 is so disappointing that parties abandon the Kyoto Protocol and look for other approaches to combat climate change.
- Other (please specify)

Predicted Outcomes of COP6 Meeting in The Hague

