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**Fifth Session of the Conference of the Parties
to the
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

**HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT
Opening Statement
by Mr Jan Szyszko of Poland
the President of COP 5**

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, I have enormous pleasure to welcome you at this high level segment of the fifth session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties. I would like to take this opportunity to thank distinguished ministers and other heads of delegation for your presence here today. It is a sign of your continuing interest in and support for this process. I am especially pleased to see so many ministers here today. In addition to environment, there are also ministers of energy, development and planning, science and technology and the economy. This is a good indication that the climate change process is maturing and that governments are embracing sustainable development. I see this as a positive step for our deliberations. Myself having an environmental background I realise very well that the implications of the Convention are much broader and concern all sectors of the economy.

I am particularly encouraged to see a great number of ministers from developing countries. This is tangible proof that climate change has a truly global dimension. What is even more important is the fact that many developing countries are the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Many of them also have a very important advantage in their hands. Their economies can evolve without making the environmental mistakes of previous development practices.

Since the Convention entered into force, implementation of our programs for emissions stabilisation by the year 2000 has helped governments to learn more about emissions and how they can be reduced. We have found that no single technology or policy prescription can stabilise greenhouse gas emissions. We have also seen that some policies have been more successful than others. While governments are still having difficulties in predicting their policy impact on future emissions, there is a prevailing sentiment that there are many economic benefits to a low-emission economy and that we can bring down emissions and keep them down. We may not have been able to do so for 2000 but we have a second chance for the 2008-2012 period. Let us firmly grasp this unique opportunity.

Distinguished colleagues, we are witnessing more and more signs of climate change. The adoption of the Kyoto Protocol two years ago gave us a powerful instrument to reverse the trend of the steady rise of greenhouse gas emissions in developed countries. It was a step in the right direction. We cannot however fail to make it effective and operational as quickly as possible. Last year when we gathered in Buenos Aires we adopted a comprehensive work schedule concerning practical steps to make the Kyoto Protocol implementable. The Bonn Conference is commonly recognised as a milestone towards reaching agreements on the key aspects of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. I can report to you, colleagues, that we have been working intensively before you arrived. My own