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UNFCCC PRESS RELEASE

MINISTERS AFFIRM SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

GENEVA, 19 July 1996 (UNFCCC) -- Ministers attending the second annual Conference of the Parties stressed in their final declaration the need to accelerate talks on how to strengthen the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The ministers also endorsed the 1995 Second Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) "as currently the most comprehensive and authoritative assessment of the science of climate change, its impacts and response options now available".

They further stated that the Report "should provide a scientific basis for urgently strengthening action at the global, regional and national levels, particularly action by Annex I (industrialized) countries to limit and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases".

"The continuing talks on new commitments for developed countries will not be easy", says Mr. Chen Chimutengwende, President of the Conference and Zimbabwe's Minister for Environment and Tourism, "but this ministerial declaration demonstrates that there is overwhelming support from most Governments for taking serious action against climate change."

Over 900 government delegates -- including some 80 ministers -- and 600 observers participated in the two-week meeting, which ended here today.

The meeting also adopted a number of formal decisions and conclusions. One of the most important is an agreement on the contents of the "national communications" that developing countries will start to submit in April 1997 (most developed countries have already completed their first communications). The information about national policies and greenhouse gas emissions contained in these documents will play a major role in generating internal and external support for developing countries to design and implement their own climate change strategies.

Other decisions concern technology transfer, financial support for Convention-related activities in developing countries, and the pilot programme for "activities implemented jointly" for reducing global greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to the political negotiations, the Conference was marked by the expanding participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representing environmental groups,