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Calgary Climate Change Accord Situational Analysis

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World Energy Cities Partnership



THE CITY OF
CALGARY

Situational Analysis

On a global scale, people, industry and governments are undertaking greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction programs and developing strategies for climate change adaptation. The 1994 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its 1997 Kyoto Protocol provide the foundation for current international cooperative action on climate change.

In December 2009, the countries of the world will meet in Copenhagen (COP15) to consider further action to ensure the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Framework Convention now, up to and beyond 2012. Discussions will focus on avoiding dangerous climate change while promoting sustainable development and economic growth through commitments to action on both emissions reduction and adaptation to the unavoidable effects of climate change.

While there is a growing consensus on the scale of emission reductions that will be required by 2050, the current negotiations remain focused on defining the range of commitments and actions that countries will undertake. In the run up to Copenhagen, extensive engagement is occurring to ensure that industry, governments, scientific and research institutions, and the non-governmental sector are fully consulted.

Reducing GHG emissions while sustaining economic growth will require a dramatic transformation of our energy systems to provide a growing supply of clean and affordable energy. GHG emissions are inextricably linked to the combustion of hydrocarbons which today, and well into the future, provide more than 90 per cent of the energy essential for human survival and comfort, and to sustain global economies. To reduce global GHG emissions on any large scale, reduction strategies will focus on:

- » Reducing demand through efficient design
- » Minimizing the environmental impact of energy production and usage
- » Choosing the most appropriate available generation technology or the end usage and
- » Adopting increased generation and use of energy from lower carbon sources of energy

The World Energy Cities Partnership (WECP) is a network of cities that hosts world-class energy operations and businesses. Their natural primary market sectors are energy and environment-related technology. The WECP acts as a forum for energy cities to share experiences, contacts and provide support for each other in tackling common industry and city issues.

The signatory WECP cities are uniquely positioned to support and lead on the phased reduction in global GHG emissions due to the technical expertise of energy related firms and institutions operating within our jurisdictions. The signing WECP member cities are strategically positioned to assist our societies by engaging with business, government, the research community and non-government organizations (NGOs) in the energy and other sectors. By developing and pursuing achievable policies, programs and practices, signing cities will achieve GHG reductions while ensuring energy security to meet the needs of our societies and our economies now and for the future.

The signatory WECP cities recognize that hydrocarbon-based fuel will continue to be a vital energy source. However, they accept and promote the rapid need to reduce emission levels. Conservation, energy-efficiency and the rapid expansion of research and technology to foster local and regional production of alternative (lower footprint GHG) energies, and the development of infra-structure for their transmission will be key strategies to meet global GHG emission reduction targets. The signatory WECP cities, their people and their businesses are positioned to be at the centre of the global transition toward a less hydrocarbon-dominated economy. They are focused on maximizing the (sustainable) production of current resources through the transition period to emerging energy technologies and leading-edge conservation practices.

The signatory WECP cities recognize the difficult challenge the world faces to agree upon global GHG reduction targets. Any agreement at the COP15 will recognize that the process of global GHG reduction must meet the needs of both developed and emerging economies, and must be staged to allow societies and economies to adapt to technologies that will emerge if a global consensus is reached. The signatory WECP cities support the principal that local action on tackling climate change emissions and its potential impacts will be the most effective solution in the long-term. This accord will demonstrate leadership across the signing member cities by establishing targets and a process to deal with these concerns.

