



Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

Contact: Alex Viets: +1-213-321-0911, aviets@igsd.org

**Protect the Earth:
Take Action on the Fast Half of Climate Change**

Washington, DC, April 22, 2010 – Carbon dioxide may be the primary culprit when it comes to climate change, but it's still only half of the problem: black carbon soot, ground-level ozone, and HFCs (a group of super greenhouse gases with hundreds to thousands the global warming potential of CO₂), are some of the non-CO₂ gases and pollutants that make up the other half of climate change.

The benefit of addressing the non-CO₂ side of climate change is not insignificant – taking action now may very well save the world from the most damaging and perhaps irreversible effects of climate change that may be only decades away. This is because cutting non-CO₂ climate forcers will produce big climate benefits in a much shorter period of time. Black carbon, for example, only stays in the atmosphere for a few days to a few weeks; CO₂ emissions can linger for decades. Reducing short-lived greenhouse gases and pollutants now helps protect the Earth in the near-term while global leaders continue to negotiate the best strategy for cutting CO₂.

“The world is short on time when it comes to climate change,” said Durwood Zaelke, President of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development. “It is essential that we start focusing on non-CO₂ now, so that we actually have a fighting chance to win the long-term battle.”

Solutions and technologies are already available to overcome the non-CO₂ challenge: black carbon soot can be significantly reduced with clean-burning cookstoves and filters for diesel vehicles; ground-level ozone can also be addressed through measures that reduce transportation pollution; and HFCs (used in refrigeration and air conditioning) can be phased down under the successful Montreal Protocol ozone treaty, potentially avoiding an astounding 100 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent by 2050. Expanding biochar production to sequester carbon is another strategy that can help to limit temperature increases to 1.5°C and bring CO₂ concentrations back down to safe levels.

Reducing black carbon and ground-level ozone emissions will also produce big benefits for public health: both contribute to air pollution which kills several million people each year.

“There is no doubt that world leaders need to take aggressive action on carbon dioxide, but that doesn't mean we can ignore the other factors that contribute to climate change,” added Zaelke. “If we hope to avoid the impacts of abrupt climate change, we need to take action on the fast half of the problem now.”

###

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.igsd.org/>

http://www.youtube.com/user/IGSDINECE#p/a/u/2/w7_I-HMVZ_0

<http://www.youtube.com/user/IGSDINECE#p/a/u/1/kUnb27tuzcY>

<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2009/10/09/0902568106.full.pdf+html>

The mission of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development is to promote just and sustainable societies and to protect the environment by advancing the understanding, development and implementation of effective, accountable and democratic systems of governance for sustainable development. The Institute brings together professionals from around the world who are committed to strengthening environmental law and institutions to promote sustainable development.