

Statement by Minister Kent Foyer of the House of Commons

OTTAWA, Dec. 12, 2011 /CNW/ – I have just returned from Durban, South Africa where countries of the world, Canada included, made it clear:

We are committed to working together to address climate change in a way that is, for countries big and small, rich or poor, fair, effective and comprehensive and allows us to continue to create jobs and growth in Canada.

Canada went to Durban in a spirit of good will. We went committed to being constructive. We went looking to reach an international climate change agreement that covers all major emitters.

As we said from the outset, the Kyoto Protocol did not represent the path forward for Canada. The Durban Platform is a way forward that builds on our work at Copenhagen and Cancun.

Before this week, the Kyoto Protocol covered less than 30% of global emissions. Now it covers less than 13% -- and that number is only shrinking. The Kyoto Protocol does not cover the world's two largest emitters – the United States and China – and therefore will not work.

It is now clear that Kyoto is not the path forward for a global solution to climate change; instead, it is an impediment.

We believe that a new agreement, with legally binding commitments for all major emitters, that allows us as a country to continue to generate jobs and economic growth, represents the path forward.

Increasingly, support is growing for Canada's position – from the EU, to the United States, Australia, New Zealand, least developed countries and the group of 43 small island states.

Canada will work towards a legally binding agreement to address global emissions that allows us to continue creating jobs and economic growth in Canada.

Domestically, we will continue to do our part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

At home, Canada and our partners at other levels of government have taken decisive action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We are already well on our way to meeting the commitment we made in Copenhagen by reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 17 per cent over 2005 levels by 2020.

We are also helping developing countries do their part with investments that will help them reduce their emissions and deal with the effects of climate change.

Canada, though, cannot do it alone.

We produce just a tiny, two per cent of global emissions.

But because a previous Liberal government signed on to Kyoto in 1997 with no intention of ever meeting targets – then did nothing for years – Canada was lagging well behind by 2006.

While our government has taken action since 2006 to make real reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, under Kyoto Canada is facing radical and irresponsible choices if we are to avoid punishing MULTI-BILLION dollar payments.

To meet the targets under Kyoto for 2012 would be the

equivalent of:

- o Either removing every car, truck, ATV, tractor, ambulance, police car and vehicle of every kind from Canadian roads.

- o Or, closing down the entire farming and agricultural sector and cutting heat to every home, office, hospital, factory and building in Canada.

The cost of not taking this type of radical and irresponsible action?

The loss of thousands of jobs or the transfer of \$14 BILLION from Canadian taxpayers to other countries – the equivalent of \$1600 from every Canadian family -- with no impact on emissions or the environment.

That's the Kyoto cost to Canadians.

And here's the kicker: global emissions would keep rising because Kyoto doesn't cover the major emitters, like the United States and China, which is why Kyoto doesn't work.

As we have said, Kyoto – for Canada – is in the past. As such, we are invoking our legal right to formally withdraw from Kyoto. This decision formalizes what we have said since 2006 that we will not implement the Kyoto Protocol.

We remain committed to negotiating an international climate change agreement that works. That means getting a pact that involves all the major emitters.

We will work toward this in the coming weeks and months.

It will not be easy but it is important.

And Canada will continue to be willing partner with those looking to address Kyoto's many failings, while also ensuring

major emitters live up to binding commitments to reduce greenhouse gases.

With that, happy to take a few questions.

For further information: Media Relations Environment Canada
819-934-8008