Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Canada) – Transcript of video clip sent to International Conference on Climate Change Adaptation, Beijing 4 July 2013

Good day everyone!

My name is Kirsty Duncan, and I am a Member of Parliament from Canada. I very much wish I could be there with you, but in the meantime, I wish you tremendous success in your deliberations, and look forward to working with you.

I want you to know the main reason I came to Canada’s Parliament was to fight for real action on climate change, and have created the first ever, all-party climate change caucus in Canada. I spent the last 25 years of my life studying climate change, particularly the impact of climate change on human health; and I had the privilege of serving on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

I also want you to know that Canadians do believe in climate change...in fact, 98% of us do. This is because we have had our climate change wakeup calls: the 1998 ice storm, which cost $5.4 billion. The 1996 Saguenay flood, which cost $1.7 billion and tragically, last week, the Calgary flood impacted thousands, and is estimated to cost $35 billion.

Climate change is our most pressing environmental issue, perhaps the defining issue of our generation it will profoundly affect our economy, health, lifestyles and social wellbeing; it requires moral responsibility and intergenerational responsibility. How we respond will define the world our children and their descendants grow up in. But climate change is not just an environmental issue. It is also a human rights issue, an international security issue, and a justice issue ...the ones who are suffering most have the least responsibility for it.

Despite these facts and international concern, climate change is not a priority for the current Canadian government. As you know, the government pulled out of the Kyoto Protocol, and removed climate accountability measures from legislation. However, Canadians and the climate change caucus I founded continue to push for action from the government.

Regarding policy, the solutions are clear: Canada must transition to the green economy, develop a national sustainable energy strategy, develop a comprehensive climate change plan, price carbon, make transportation more sustainable, identify and achieve targets for renewables, energy efficiency, and phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies and develop a comprehensive adaptation plan.

You should know that there’s consensus in Canada between environmentalists and industry about a great number of policy options. The divergences concern the level of stringency of the policies.
What is at stake?

Impacts on Canada’s agriculture, environment, fisheries, forests, water, and ultimately on Canadians …and the world’s peoples, the future of our children and grandchildren, financial burden to the next generations …adaptation costs are estimated to be $2143 B annually by 2050 in Canada alone.

Today, there is an absolute urgency, as 2015 looms, and the world tries to hold the average climate warming to just 2°C, the threshold associated with dangerous climate change as we work internationally, we must:

- build trust and strengthen good faith
- push for strong action despite difficult economic times
- work towards an inclusive deal that does not leave countries or groups behind, deepen world poverty, or threaten international security

In summary, climate change is not a closed case, we can rise to the challenge. Science has told us what we need to do to limit the warming to 2°C, and what the risks of failing to do so might be. It is now the job of politicians to end the pessimism, translate science into policy and action, and as we contemplate climate legislation, ask ourselves if it is something of which our children and grandchildren would be proud.