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COP25 NATIONAL STATEMENT: ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE
CANADA MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE,
THE HONOURABLE JONATHAN WILKINSON

THE HONOURABLE JONATHAN WILKINSON (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Canada): Hello.

First and foremost, I want to thank Chile for its leadership in bringing us all to COP25 and to Spain for hosting. Canada welcomes Chile's priorities including a focus on oceans, renewable energy, the circular economy, and biodiversity.

As Canada's new Minister of Environment and Climate Change, I am certainly very pleased to be here. My predecessor, Catherine McKenna, built important partnerships with many of you, and I look forward to strengthening those relationships and building new ones.

In my previous role, I was Canada's Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, and in that role, I saw the impacts the climate is having on our oceans very clearly.

In British Columbia, my home, we see it in what is happening to wild Pacific salmon stocks. Each year, the numbers are declining—meaning less food for Indigenous communities, less income for fish harvesters, and less biodiversity in our ecosystems.

Lives are being impacted. Last year, forest fires devastated Canada's West, driving thousands from their homes. Canadian scientists recently released a report that showed Canada is warming at twice the global rate, and, in our North, it is three times. We've all seen the reports about the potential of an ice-free Arctic. I actually saw some of that last August, when I joined Prime Minister Trudeau, in Nunavut, to declare a large protected area known as Tuvaijuittuq, which is protecting Canada's High Arctic North.

Climate change is the defining issue of our time, and it is the main reason I personally entered politics. Before I was in politics, I ran a number of clean-technology companies focused very much on the greenhouse gas issue. I am certainly optimistic about technology's

potential to help us with our climate challenge in ways that can carve new pathways to prosperity and create jobs. Canada is ready to be among the leaders in making this global shift happen.

In October, Canadians re-elected our government with a mandate to take ambitious climate action. Last year, we enacted a price on pollution, and many said, at the time, that the political risk was too high. Instead, over two thirds of Canadians voted for parties that support pricing. Putting a price on pollution is a key part of our climate plan, and we encourage all nations to consider putting a price on pollution.

We saw huge turnouts at September's climate marches, including when Prime Minister Trudeau marched alongside half a million people in Montréal. And I participated in just as big a march in Vancouver.

Canada is proud to be part of an international effort to increase cooperation and climate ambition with an emphasis on gender equality and empowerment of women. In 2017, we co-founded the Powering Past Coal Alliance, with the UK, and while hosting the G7 last year, we introduced the Ocean Plastics Charter to fight plastic pollution.

We are also delivering on our commitment to support developing countries, including ensuring responsiveness to the needs of small island states and coastal communities.

Here in Madrid, we must unlock opportunities for deeper emission reductions and help countries meet and exceed their targets. On Article 6, Canada is committed to ensuring environmental integrity—by avoiding double counting, ensuring transparency, and promoting sustainable development—so that international cooperation can help all of us increase our ambition.

Indigenous communities are among the first to feel the impacts of climate change. Canada strongly supports respect for human rights and for the rights of Indigenous Peoples, in the implementation of the Paris accord, and including Article 6.

By establishing robust rules, here at COP25, we can provide the certainty the private sector needs to mobilize finance, which will help us create a cleaner economy.

We have all seen the latest scientific reports: We know we must increase our ambition. Canada has done a lot thus far—introducing a price on pollution, phasing out coal, making historic investments in renewables, building public-transit projects across the country, and doubling our protection of nature. But we must do more. We know that we need to not only meet our Paris target, but to exceed it, and Prime Minister Trudeau has recently committed that Canada will focus on exceeding its current target.

Further, we will come forward with legislation that commits us to a net-zero target by 2050, with milestones every five years, paired with a just transition act to make sure we keep people at the centre of our policies. We must address climate change in a way that's empathetic and

sensitive to the legitimate concerns about this transition, including those expressed by communities in our hydrocarbon-producing regions.

I am proud to be doing the work alongside the incredible Canadians we have here at COP, which include provincial and territorial governments, industry, environmental groups, labour, medical professionals, young people, parliamentarians, and Indigenous Peoples—and in partnership with all of you.

Canada is committed to working with you to advance momentum on climate action. It is also in this spirit of partnership that we are presently seeking a seat on the United Nations Security Council. We hope to continue working together to build a better world for now and for future generations.

Thank you.

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