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Mineral Products Association Calls on the Government to Pursue Realistic Carbon Reduction Targets

With just days to go before international governments declare their domestic carbon reduction commitments under the 2009 Copenhagen Accord, the Mineral Products Association today called on the government to resist moves to increase its commitment to a -30% carbon reduction target until further comparable unilateral commitments are made by other major economies. Dr Pal Chana, MPA's Executive Director Cement and Lime, said "the government should stick to its current EU policy commitment of -20% when the issue is debated at the European Council meeting on February 11 unless other countries agree to fall in line."

Dr Chana added "The European Union has taken a leadership role in climate change and has adopted the ambitious unilateral target of a -20% reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases by 2020 based on 1990 levels. The European Council of 10/11 December 2009 reiterated the EU's conditions to move from -20% to -30%. These are *"that other developed countries commit themselves to comparable emission reductions and that developing countries contribute adequately according to their responsibilities and respective capabilities"*. These conditions have so far clearly neither been met by the principal emitters of the *'other developed countries'* nor by *'developing countries'*. Copenhagen has demonstrated that, whilst other countries are willing to take action to tackle climate change, they are not willing to take comparable or equivalent actions to those proposed by the European Union.

The UK cement and lime industries fully support the government's ambitious CO₂ reduction targets, but need a level playing field at a global and European level in order to maintain a healthy domestic manufacturing industry. "Carbon leakage, where cement and lime production moves off-shore to countries without comparable

carbon constraints taking our climate change responsibility and jobs with it is a real threat if the government and the EU unilaterally adopt a -30% reduction target. It is vital that the UK government recognises this and acts accordingly” said Dr Chana.

Cement is essential to economic and social development. Homes, schools, hospitals, roads, bridges, railways and much more all depend on this critical ingredient in concrete; the second most consumed substance on the planet after water. Here in the UK the cement industry has already taken a number of steps to minimise its carbon footprint, including massive investment in process efficiency, significantly increasing the use of waste derived fuels in place of virgin fossil fuels (particularly biomass) and increasing the supply of blended cements that contain less of the energy intensive material: cement clinker. Taken together, these measures have seen the UK cement industry reduce its CO₂ emissions by 40% between 1990 and 2008.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

The Mineral Products Association (MPA) is the representative body for the aggregates, asphalt, cement, concrete, lime, mortar and silica sand industries with a cumulative total of £5 billion contribution to the UK economy. MPA Cement members include Cemex UK, Hanson Cement, Lafarge Cement UK and Tarmac Buxton Lime and Cement. They are the major domestic manufacturers and produce over 90% of the cement sold in the UK.

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