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**Prime Minister and Business Secretary visit London Gateway port site
as construction gets underway**

The Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Business Secretary Lord Mandelson visited London Gateway's port construction site today to mark the start of work on one of the UK's largest infrastructure projects.

DP World is behind the £1.5 billion development, which will be Europe's largest combined deep-sea port and logistics park.

Situated on the north bank of the River Thames near Thurrock in Essex, the 1,500-acre site is the same size as two Cities of London. It will give unrivalled deep-sea shipping access and transform the movement of freight around the UK, reducing road haulage and cutting CO2 emissions.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown said:

"The London Gateway is a significant foreign investment into the UK. It is a massive vote of confidence in the UK's economic recovery and in this region. UK Trade & Investment and other Government departments have worked closely with DP World over a number of years to make this project possible.

"I am delighted with the decision to locate this world-class project here in the UK. It will help bring the largest deep sea vessels here and improve the efficiency of the UK's freight distribution, creating thousands of jobs, future growth and economic prosperity."

According to an independent survey commissioned by DP World, the development will generate 36,000 jobs in total, including 12,000 jobs in logistics and construction that will be created in the short term.

Business Secretary Lord Mandelson and Minister for Trade, Investment and Small Business Lord Davies of Abersoch were among those who worked with the company over recent months to secure this investment.

Business Secretary Lord Mandelson said:

"London Gateway will mean the creation of 36,000 direct and indirect jobs. This project sends a message to companies worldwide that the UK is the number one place in Europe to invest. It is an excellent example of the long-term investment that the UK is looking for.

"Developing our infrastructure will underpin the steps the Government is already taking to stimulate the economy, and will lay the foundations for further advances in the future."

The Prime Minister and Lord Mandelson were welcomed to the site by DP World Chairman Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, DP World CEO Mohammed Sharaf, and other senior company officials.

DP World Chairman Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem said:

“When complete, London Gateway will provide the UK with modern, efficient infrastructure while at the same time reducing CO2 emissions and supply chain costs. By starting the major elements of construction, we ensure maximum flexibility to develop the project efficiently in line with market demand.”

On completion, the London Gateway will link road, rail and sea. The company estimates it will save over 60 million HGV miles per year - equal to about 2,000 truck movements per day on the nation’s roads. This will amount to a reduction of 148,000 tonnes per annum of CO2 emissions. With the London Gateway acting as a hub, containers can be sent via smaller ships to other ports around the UK.

The Department for Transport and the Department for Communities and Local Government both contributed to the project.

The London Gateway is one of the main economic drivers for helping the regeneration of a large part of the Thames Gateway, the UK’s largest regeneration area covering a 40-mile stretch across East London, South Essex and North Kent. The Communities and Local Government Department has been one of the major partners leading work to support local businesses, build infrastructure and strengthen and develop thousands of new jobs and homes.

Communities Secretary John Denham said:

“The London Gateway port and logistics park will transform the Thames Gateway, making it a global leader in logistics and creating thousands of jobs that will benefit residents and communities across South Essex and beyond.”

Media contacts:

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Project fact file

- London Gateway will be the first new deep sea container port in the UK for over 25 years.
- The 1,500 acre site – the size of two Cities of London - is located 25 miles east of central London on the former Shell Haven Oil Refinery on the north bank of the River Thames at Stanford le Hope, Essex.
- The combination of the port and logistics park will reduce the need for national road freight haulage, as containers will not need to travel by truck to distribution centres, which are often located many miles from existing UK ports. Instead, shipping containers will be unpacked at distribution buildings integrated into the new port, allowing businesses to cut their CO2 emissions and their supply chain costs.
- Research shows that the integrated development will save some 2,000 truck movements on UK roads a day. This equals savings of 148,000 tonnes of CO2 per annum.
- London Gateway will bring many thousands of jobs to the area, which is in the heart of the Thames Gateway regeneration zone.
- The European Commission is providing up to €14 million to this project through the TEN-T Agency.
- London Gateway has been progressing its environmental monitoring and management programme for many years prior to this foundation work getting the go-ahead. Extensive marine surveys have been carried out on the Thames Estuary and monitoring is taking place to ensure the construction programme is regulated by the world's toughest environmental assurance laws.

Notes to Editors:

1. About UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) UKTI is the government organisation that helps UK-based companies succeed in the global economy. We also help overseas companies bring their high quality investment to the UK's economy – acknowledged as Europe's best place from which to succeed in global business. UKTI offers expertise and contacts through its extensive network of specialists in the UK, and in British embassies and other diplomatic offices around the world. We provide companies with the tools they require to be competitive on the world stage. For more information please visit www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk or telephone +44 (0)20 7215 8000. For latest press releases, visit the online newsroom at www.newsroom.uktradeinvest.gov.uk. More information on UKTI can be found at blog.ukti.gov.uk; twitter.com/londonukti; and www.flickr.com/photos/tags/ukti.

2. About DP World: DP World is one of the largest marine terminal operators in the world, with 49 terminals and 12 new developments across 31 countries. Its dedicated, experienced and professional team of nearly 30,000 people serves customers in some of the most dynamic economies in the world. DP World aims to enhance customers' supply chain efficiency by effectively managing container, bulk and other terminal cargo. The company constantly invests in terminal infrastructure, facilities and people, working closely with customers and business partners to provide quality services today and tomorrow, when and where customers need them. In taking this customer-centric approach, DP World is building on the established relationships and superior level of service demonstrated at its flagship Jebel Ali facility in Dubai, which has been voted "Best Seaport in the Middle East" for 15 consecutive years. In 2008, DP World handled more than 46.8 million TEU (twenty-foot equivalent container units) across its portfolio from the Americas to Asia – an increase of 8% on 2007. With a pipeline of expansion and development projects in key growth markets, including India, China and the Middle East, capacity is expected to rise to around 95 million TEU over the next ten years. www.dpworld.com.