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## Saudi Arabia: start-up of the world's largest carbon monoxide unit

press release

### Contacts:

#### Corporate Communications

Corinne Estrade-Bordry  
+ 33 (0)1 40 62 51 31  
Garance Bertrand  
+ 33 (0)1 40 62 59 62

#### Investor Relations

Virginia Jeanson  
+33 (0)1 40 62 57 37  
Annie Fournier  
+33 (0)1 40 62 57 18

#### Lurgi

Klaus Kilian  
+49 (0) 69 58 08 42 54

### Air Liquide Engineering

designs, develops and builds gas production units for the Group or for its customers. It comprises **3,200 employees**, spread over **ten Engineering & Construction centres**, covering its major markets.

It has integrated in 2007 teams of **Lurgi**, a leading technology company operating worldwide in the fields of process engineering and plant contracting for the refining and petrochemicals markets.

### Air Liquide in the Middle East

Air Liquide is present in **Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the United Arab Emirates**, where the Group has established its headquarters for Middle East region.

With **450 employees** in the Middle East, Air Liquide invested US\$300 million over the 2002-2007 period and **has an investment program of another US\$1 billion in the Arabic Gulf region over the next five years.**

Worldwide carbon monoxide demand is estimated to be growing at about +4% per year. In the petrochemical industry, carbon monoxide is mainly used in the production of acetic acid and polyurethane intermediates.

Air Liquide has just commissioned **the world's largest carbon monoxide unit**, handing it over to the customer, **Saudi International Petrochemicals Company (Sipchem)**. This new carbon monoxide unit is located on the industrial complex of Jubail City, in eastern **Saudi Arabia**, near the Arabic Gulf. This project was awarded in 2006 to Air Liquide and Lurgi.

The carbon monoxide unit **designed and built by the Engineering and Construction teams of Air Liquide**, will have a production capacity of **335,000 tonnes per year**. The production of carbon monoxide calls upon the combination of **very high temperature technologies (+ 1200°C)** as well as **very low cryogenic temperature (-190°C)**. Those two processes are mastered by the Group and will be integrated in this very large unit.

The carbon monoxide produced in the unit will primarily serve as feedstock for the production of **acetic acid** used for the production of Polyvinyl Acetate, which has applications in water-based paints, adhesives and in the processing of paper and textiles.

**François Darchis**, Senior Vice-President Air Liquide Group, in charge of R&D, Advanced Technologies and Engineering & Construction, commented: **"Building the world's largest carbon monoxide unit is a challenge that we were delighted to take on and we thank Sipchem for their trust. Air Liquide teams are constantly improving technological solutions in order to increase the efficiency and reliability of our units to meet the needs of our customers.**

**We are particularly proud of this success at Jubail, a major industrial complex. This project reinforces our presence in Saudi Arabia and once again demonstrates the potential that lies in emerging economies, one of the Group's growth drivers."**

**Air Liquide is the world leader in gases for industry, health and the environment**, and is present in over **75 countries** with **43,000 employees**. Oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen and rare gases have been at the core of Air Liquide's activities since its creation in 1902. Using these molecules, Air Liquide continuously reinvents its business, anticipating the needs of current and future markets. The Group innovates to enable progress, to achieve dynamic growth and a consistent performance.

**Innovative technologies** that curb polluting emissions, lower industry's energy use, recover and reuse natural resources or develop the energies of tomorrow, such as hydrogen, biofuels or photovoltaic energy... Oxygen for hospitals, homecare, fighting nosocomial infections... Air Liquide combines many products and technologies to develop valuable applications and services not only for its customers but also for society.

**A partner for the long term**, Air Liquide relies on employee commitment, customer trust and shareholder support to pursue its vision of sustainable, competitive growth. The **diversity** of Air Liquide's teams, businesses, markets and geographic presence provides a solid and sustainable base for its development and strengthens its ability to push back its own limits, conquer new territories and build its future.

**Air Liquide explores the best that air can offer to preserve life, staying true to its sustainable development approach**. In 2008, the Group's revenues amounted to **€13.1 billion**, of which almost 80% were earned outside France. Air Liquide is listed on the Paris Euronext stock exchange (compartment A) and is a member of the CAC 40 and Dow Jones Euro Stoxx 50 indexes.