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June 1, 2004

ZEON Corporation (President & CEO: Naozumi Furukawa) held a ceremony to mark the completion of a facility for the high-performance transparent thermoplastic resin or Cyclo-olefin polymer (COP, product names ZEONEX[®] and ZEONOR[®]), at the Mizushima Plant (Kurashiki, Okayama Prefecture) on June 1, 2004. The plan had an original capacity of 5,000 tons a year, and this facility was built to add another 5,000 tons annual capacity. As a result, production capacity of COP has been doubled to 10,000 tons annually. The total capital investment was approximately ¥4 billion.

The expansion of production capacity aims to meet the soaring demand for LCD optical film (product name: ZEONOR Film[®]), increased use of optical lenses and prisms due to rapid growth of the market for cameras on mobile phones, digital cameras, and DVDs, as well as increased demand for diffusion plates for LCDs. Our specialty plastic business, which consists of COP and precision-processed COP products, has a big potential area of our future growth, and we aim to double sales in the near future.

Supplementary explanation of COP

The Company is aiming at full utilization of C5 fraction, a by-product produced when ethylene and propylene are derived from naphtha. COP is made from dicyclopentadiene (DCPD) extracted and separated from the C5 fraction. ZEONEX[®], a high-grade COP originally developed and marketed by ZEON in 1990 ahead of other companies across the globe, exhibits low water absorbency, good fluidity and high-precision molding property when heated or melted, and a lower specific gravity. Utilizing its high transparency and low double-refraction properties, it is mainly used for optical devices such as lenses and prisms for cameras on mobile phones, digital cameras, and compact cameras. It is also used in pick-up lenses for OA equipment, and for optical disks including CDs, MDs, and DVDs.

In 1998, the Company launched ZEONOR[®], a standard-grade COP with improved impact- and heat-resistant properties as well as high transparency. It is widely used in the manufacture of light guides and diffusion plates for LCDs, optical film, extensions for automobile headlights, tableware, and pharmaceutical containers and packages.

 **For further information**

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