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PRESS RELEASE

Copenhagen United Nations Climate Change Conference ends with political agreement to cap temperature rise, reduce emissions and raise finance

(Copenhagen, 19 December 2009) The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen ended today with an agreement by countries to cap the global temperature rise by committing to significant emission reductions, and to raise finance to kickstart action in the developing world to deal with climate change.

At the meeting, world leaders agreed the 'Copenhagen Accord', which was supported by a majority of countries, including amongst them the biggest and the richest, and the smallest and most vulnerable.

"We have sealed the deal," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said. "This accord cannot be everything that everyone hoped for, but it is an essential beginning," he said.

The Copenhagen Accord recognizes the scientific view that an increase in global temperature below 2 degrees is required to stave off the worst effects of climate change.

In order to achieve this goal, the accord specifies that industrialised countries will commit to implement, individually or jointly, quantified economy-wide emissions targets from 2020, to be listed in the accord before 31 January 2010.

A number of developing countries, including major emerging economies, agreed to communicate their efforts to limit greenhouse gas emissions every two years, also listing their voluntary pledges before the 31 January 2010.

Nationally appropriate mitigation actions seeking international support are to be recorded in a registry along with relevant technology, finance and capacity building support from industrialised nations.

"We must be honest about what we have got," said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer. "The world walks away from Copenhagen with a deal. But clearly ambitions to reduce emissions must be raised significantly if we are to hold the world to 2 degrees," he added.



Because the pledges listed by developed and developing countries may, according to science, be found insufficient to keep the global temperature rise below 2 degrees or less, leaders called for a review of the accord, to be completed by 2015.

The review would include a consideration of the long-term goal to limit the global average temperature rise to 1.5 degrees.

Heads of state and government also intend to unleash prompt action on mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology, reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries and capacity-building.

To this effect, they intend to establish the "Copenhagen Green Climate Fund" to support immediate action on climate change. The collective commitment towards the fund by developed countries over the next three years will approach 30 billion US dollars.

For long-term finance, developed countries agreed to support a goal of jointly mobilizing 100 billion dollars a year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries.

In order to step up action on the development and transfer of technology, governments intend to establish a new technology mechanism to accelerate development and transfer in support of action on adaptation and mitigation.

119 world leaders attended the meeting, the largest gathering of heads of state and government in the history of the UN. "Climate change is the permanent leadership challenge of our time," said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. "I therefore urge world leaders to remain engaged," he said.

"We now have a package to work with and begin immediate action," said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer. "However, we need to be clear that it is a letter of intent and is not precise about what needs to be done in legal terms. So the challenge is now to turn what we have agreed politically in Copenhagen into something real, measurable and verifiable," he added.

The next annual UN Climate Change Conference will take place towards the end of 2010 in Mexico City, preceded by a major two week negotiating session in Bonn, Germany, scheduled 31 May to 11 June.

About the UNFCCC

With 194 Parties, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 190 of the UNFCCC Parties. Under the Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialized countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments. The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

Note to journalists

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