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PRESS RELEASE

UN Climate Chief: Raise Support Now for Accelerating Global Climate Action

New Universal Climate Agreement Must Meet Adaptation Needs of Vulnerable Communities

(Kathmandu, Nepal, 30 April 2014) – Communities across the developing world have a wealth of local knowledge and ingenuity to adapt more successfully to climate change but they urgently need greater international support to unlock their ambitions, Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) said on Wednesday.

“In the past few years, governments under the UN climate change convention have launched a whole new set of institutions to support action by the developing world. But there is still a gap between intent and full implementation that will allow vulnerable countries to make the most of their own abilities and adapt at a faster and more decisive scale,” she said, after addressing the 8th Annual Community Based Adaptation Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal.

“Next year, governments will agree a new, universal climate agreement that must put the world on track to a carbon-neutral future. An essential foundation for a successful agreement must be greater ambition by all sectors of society to reduce emissions and to support developing nations and communities build climate-resilient futures,” she said.

The Kathmandu conference focused on issues such as how to ensure international finance can reach communities in need and how the private sector can better support such communities to adapt to climate change.

“Nepal itself is estimated to be losing one per cent of its GDP to floods and landslides alone, a figure that will only rise unless the global community puts in place the policies and the pathways to bend the emissions curve down and climate proof communities and development here and across the vulnerable world,” said Ms. Figueres.

She underlined the importance of the new Green Climate Fund (GCF) which was established to become a major conduit of finance for developing country climate action. It will use public funds directly but also to leverage even higher levels of private sector investments for nations that might otherwise find access to such funding difficult.

“It is in the interest of all sides that developed countries come forward with substantial pledges to capitalize the GCF. Billions are required. At least ten billion dollars are urgently needed as initial capitalization so the GCF can operate quickly and at scale,” she said.



A whole set of funds and projects supporting climate action by developing nations already exist. These include those linked directly to or established by decisions under the UNFCCC.

These include the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund and the GCF. They also include the Global Environment Facility and others such as the Climate Investment Funds generated through the World Bank.

Under the UN climate convention, developing countries also have the opportunity to give potential funders or other assisting institutions access to their detailed plans for low-carbon development and adaptation to climate change.

These include the so-called Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) and the new more long term National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

“The urgent task is to ensure that all these working parts are being designed, redesigned and dovetailed together into the most powerful engine of change to a carbon-neutral world – this will in part define the lives and legitimate aspirations of people for many years to come,” said Ms. Figueres.

Momentum for Change – How Local Action is Transforming Lives and Livelihoods

During her visit, Ms. Figueres is highlighting local climate action happening on the ground in Nepal.

This includes hearing at first-hand how the government, NGO leaders, youth activists and entrepreneurs are coping with, for example, the phenomenon of glacial lake outburst floods linked to the melting of glaciers high in the Himalayas and the development of micro-hydro projects which are lighting up the lives of thousands of rural Nepalese.

She is also visiting a local company called Biocomp Nepal, which is transforming organic waste from vegetable markets into compost. Developed in cooperation with non-profit foundation Myclimate, the project is generating income for the community in Kathmandu Valley and at the same time cutting greenhouse gas emissions from landfills.

In 2012, Biocomp Nepal was named as a Lighthouse Activity under the UNFCCC’s Momentum for Change initiative.

- Over the project lifetime, Biocomp will reduce CO₂ emissions by 4,070 tonnes per year and up to a maximum of 7,328 tonnes of CO₂ by 2022;
- By 2015, the business aims to collect and treat 50 tonnes of municipal organic waste per day;

“Biocomp underlines how combating climate change is everyone’s business and that curbing emissions can trigger multiple positive benefits from overcoming poverty and generating jobs to building more resilient and productive agricultural systems,” said Ms. Figueres.

Her visit to Nepal comes as projects around the world are submitting applications to the next round of Momentum for Change awards with the 2014 winners to be announced in Lima, Peru at the UN Climate Change Conference meeting later this year.



Ms. Figueres encouraged participants at the International Conference on Community Based Adaptation to apply and to alert the world to the transformational actions they are undertaking.

Another local project is making cleaner, more efficient cook stoves that reduce emissions linked with both climate change and the air pollution that are harming the health and claiming the lives of millions of mainly women and children globally.

This project is supported by the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol – the emission reduction treaty linked to the UNFCCC. Since 200, 4 over 7,000 CDM projects ranging from energy efficiency improvements to renewable energy schemes have been registered cutting emissions of CO₂ by 1.5 billion tonnes and generating economic benefits to host countries of up to \$13.5 billion.

“If the people of Nepal, Lighthouse Activities like Biocomp and the myriad of community-led adaptation projects emerging across the globe are one litmus test of ambition, then the world can get on track towards a far more prosperous, healthier and safer century,” said Ms. Figueres.

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About the UNFCCC

With 195 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 192 of the UNFCCC Parties. For the first commitment period of the Kyoto 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. In Doha in 2012, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, which establishes the second commitment period under the Protocol. 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.

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About Momentum for Change

Momentum for Change aims to create a public platform that raises awareness about concrete mitigation and adaptation actions being implemented by a wide range of stakeholders at regional, national, or local level. The Momentum for Change initiative is accepting applications for its 2014 Lighthouse Activities until 23 May. Visit <http://www.momentum4change.org> for complete details

See also: momentum4change.org

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About the CDM

The CDM allows emission-reduction projects in developing countries to earn certified emission reductions (CERs), each equivalent to one tonne of CO₂. CERs can be traded and sold, and used by industrialized countries to meet a part of their emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol. With more than 7,600 registered projects and programmes in 105 developing countries, the CDM has proven to be a powerful mechanism to deliver finance for emission-reduction projects and contribute to sustainable development.

See also: <<http://cdm.unfccc.int> >

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