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Organización
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Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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Countdown to Copenhagen

The UN Climate Change Conference (COP-15) will bring together over 15,000 officials from 192 countries from 7-18 December in the Danish capital. *"Failure to reach broad agreement in Copenhagen would be morally inexcusable, economically short-sighted and politically unwise"*, says United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

COP-15 aims to mark a turning point in the international fight against climate change. Through the UN Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations is urging the countries of the world to reach a strong climate deal as a successor to the 1997 Kyoto protocol which fixed emission cuts for 37 industrialised states and which expires in 2012. The aim is to include targets for a second commitment period for the Protocol, starting in 2013.

Today's approach to combating climate change is more multi-faceted, more complex than in 1997, in keeping with advances in scientific understanding of the processes involved, spear-headed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Industrialised nations are still singled out to commit to new targets for carbon cuts.

But emerging economies are now also urged to curb their emissions. Also, funding for developing countries to turn to low-carbon economies and to adapt to climate change is now considered a vital part of the global response.

Criteria for Success

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has set out what he believes to be the criteria for a successful summit. Firstly, every country must do all it can to slash emissions from all sources, including deforestation and shipping. Secondly, support for adaptation is vital to strengthen the world's ability to cope with an already changing climate.

Thirdly, funding must be made available to enable poorer countries to make the transition to low-carbon economies and finally, the whole must be underpinned by an equitable governance structure.

The Science of Climate Change

According to the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC, "Warming of the climate system is unequivocal as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice and rising global sea level". The Report goes on to state that "Most of the observed increase in temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic GHG concentrations".

The science of climate change tells us therefore that mitigation and adaptation to climate change is critically urgent. The IPCC argues that the costs associated with mitigating greenhouse gas emissions are modest.



Funding Adaptation

The UN aims to collect an annual global fund of \$150billion by the year 2020 to avert scientific predictions of potentially catastrophic alterations in sea-level, weather patterns and freshwater resources. Estimates show that returning global energy-related CO2 emissions to 2005 levels by 2030 would require a large shift in investment patterns, though the net additional investment needed ranges from "negligible" to between 5 and 10 per cent (IPCC, 2007).

- Investment flows to developing countries are estimated at about 46 per cent of the total needed in 2030. The resulting emission reductions achieved by those countries in 2030 would amount to 68 percent of global emission reductions.
- Under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), industrialized countries can invest in emissions

UNESCO's Work on Climate Issues

In line with the UNESCO Strategy for Action on Climate Change and its plan of action, UNESCO aims to help Member States to:

- build, make available and maintain the climate change knowledge base
- promote mitigation of adaptation to climate change, including through education and public awareness

The strategy also includes moving towards a climate-neutral UNESCO

UNESCO at COP-15

- Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO will attend COP-15 and the high-level UN side event with the UN Secretary-General
- UNESCO has contributed to the UN policy paper on adaptation prepared for COP-15
- UNESCO will organize jointly with WMO a side event on climate knowledge
- UNESCO staff will attend COP-15 sessions and participate in several side events
- UNESCO and IOC will have stands at COP-15

reduction projects in developing nations, as an alternative to making more expensive emissions cuts at home. In this way, it allows net global greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced at a low global cost.

- The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provides grants to developing countries for projects in six areas: biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer and persistent organic pollutants. As the designated financial body for the Framework Convention, it helps countries meet their obligations as signatories.

The Road to Copenhagen

The Bali Action plan was adopted by the UNFCCC parties in 2007 at COP-13 in Bali. The plan states that the UNFCCC parties should work towards an agreement at COP-15 including in several key areas:

- a shared vision of what UNFCCC parties should achieve (such as a long-term goal for reductions of greenhouse gas emissions reductions);
- climate change mitigation
- adaptation to unavoidable climate change impacts;
- technology transfer for adaptation and mitigation;
- finance and investment to linked to the above issues.

The plan also foresees negotiations on targets for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol starting in 2013

A Climate of Cooperation

International cooperation and solidarity are essential ingredients in the UNFCCC and the Bali Action Plan. This includes assisting developing nations with mitigation and adaptation actions, such as through technology transfer, financing and support to efforts to slow down deforestation and land degradation in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For the UN, climate change and COP-15 has produced perhaps an unprecedented level of UN collaboration and partnerships. Spearheaded by the UN Chiefs Executive Board (CEB), the UN is collaborating in support of the UNFCCC and its Secretariat in several key areas. These include the climate knowledge base, for which the World Meteorological Organization and UNESCO are entrusted by the UN Secretary-General with the role as co-conveners for UN-wide cooperation.

Contacts:

Peter Dogse – p.dogse@unesco.org

Link: www.unesco.org/en/climatechange