

From Kwadwo B. Donkor, Copenhagen

The Danish Prime Minister, Lars Lokke Rasmussen, yesterday appealed to rich nations to assist countries suffering from the dire consequences of global warming.

He said, "it is our mission to come to the aid of those who already suffer and to deliver a long term solution to the mounting problem of global warming."

Addressing the opening ceremony of the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of Parties at this year's United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change here in Copenhagen, Mr. Rasmussen, reminded that global warming "knows no border and does not discriminate; it affects all."

He therefore called for a strong and ambitious climate change agreement," adding that the "sheer the magnitude of our task is only matched by our determination."

According to him, the climate change summit was an opportunity that the world could not afford to miss and urged the delegates to be committed to the cause that has gathered them here in Copenhagen.

He admitted that the task ahead of them of them in the next two weeks, require of them to make the most difficult but necessary decisions in order to address the mounting problems of the future.

The challenge however, he said, was to translate the strong political will into a strong common approach to fore an agreement that will provide for effective global solutions.

The Executive Secretary of UNFCCC, Yvo de Boer, also stressed the need for the world to act now, saying, "the time to issue statements is over, let's act now."

He said governments must give their adequate response to the urgent needs of climate change.

He was hopeful that Copenhagen will be turning point in a climate deal as many countries have made pledges to cut down on their carbon emissions.

"Never in 17 years of climate negotiations have so many different countries made so many pledges," he said.

Mr de Boer said offers of finance for clean technology for poor countries were also coming through and talks were progressing on a long-term vision of massive carbon cuts by 2050.

On finance, he said developing countries will need, on the average close to 10 million pounds annually to cope adapt to climate change.

Over 100 heads of state and government have already announced their willingness to participate in the concluding days of the conference.

So far, more than 36,000 people have applied to take part in the conference, including 5,000 journalists though the Bella Centre, venue for the 11 days conference, is only 15, 000.



From Kwadwo B. Donkor, Copenhagen-Denmark

The popular adage that 'oncoming events cast their shadow' seems to be given meaning at the ongoing meeting on climate change in Copenhagen as the call to seal deal is gradually giving to new consensus: that COP 15 should be the turning point.

This stems from the fact that since the US, the world number polluter was not likely to pass a carbon trade regulation before the end of the conference, a deal that will legally bind it may not be feasible.

Again, it was necessitated the shift in stance by both the US and European Union that emerging economies such as Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa make pledges to reduce their carbon emissions before they, the industrialized countries, commit to a new deal.

China and India, however, vehemently opposed this new demand arguing that it would be unfair to ask developing countries to slow down their developmental to reduce poverty in lieu of carbon emissions.

Addressing the media yesterday, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Yvo de Boer, although he was not explicit, believed that it has warned the United States of America (USA) that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be forced to regulate its activities if it failed to pass a carbon trade regulation.

again urged negotiators at the ongoing talks to make the best of first week

There is a growing tension among third world countries attending the on going Climate Change conference in Copenhagen that after all, it might not deliver a deal.

Although many believe that Copenhagen will be a turning point for the Kyoto Protocol, the general consensus is that it will not seal the deal.

From Kwadwo B. Donkor, Copenhagen, Denmark.

The G77+China, a group made of African and other developing countries at the ongoing 15<sup>th</sup> session of Conference of heads of Parties (COP) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen has registered their opposition to what it termed as an attempt by the west to stampede the negotiation process.

It also decried the attempt by the west to sow seeds of division among them by trying to divide the African group into poor and vulnerable groups and enticing the latter with more finance for adaptation programmes.

This issue, which started in Bangkok last October, is alleged to have been mooted by the US and supported by the European Union.

Reacting to draft document purported to have been circulated by the Danish prime minister to guide the negotiations, the African group, led by Ambassador Lumumba Stanislaus-Kaw Di-Aping, said the attempt to lure the so-called vulnerable countries to break away from the G77 was a ploy to them stuck to the Breton Woods institutions thus stall their development.

He warned the Danish prime Minister, who is alleged to have sneaked in Lars Lokke Rasmussen, to differentiate between his political ambition and a successful deal.

Mr. Di-aping argued that what the prime minister did was a clear demonstration of a desperate need to get a deal at all cost.

According to him, a deal that will result from the conference should aim at a radical and ambitious reduction of carbon dioxide and should not be seen as advancing only the interest of the developed countries.

He said what is needed is deal that will bring about global green economy revolution and will lead to harmony between man and nature and not to retain the status quo.

Contrary to speculations that the group had decided to boycott the talks, the ambassador explained that the group was not threatening to walk out of the COP 15 negotiations, because of their incredible importance, adding, “Developing countries are unified in their opposition

to such a slanted agreement, however, they will not sign an “unfair and equitable” agreement.”

“The G77 is committed to the negotiations to the last and we hope that in the end, common sense will prevail and men and women will rise up to the crisis,” he stated.

He urged the US to join the Kyoto Protocol as the world cannot achieve an equitable deal that ‘will save Africa and the small islands without the participation of the US.’”

This, he explained, was because the US has the largest historical emission and therefore should be part of the deal and make a commitment to cut down on its current emissions.

In related development, the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, Yvo de Boer, denied that the Danish government tabled any document for negotiation. He explained that prior to the conference; the government has held a wide range of negotiations with all the working groups.

He said the process has not changed and the working groups are still working on their various text documents for the negotiations.

“What is important, he said, “it that all the parties want the continuation of the Kyoto Protocol with few amendments,” and consequently urged them to work towards achieving that aim.

With 193 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

From Kwadwo B. Donkor, Copenhagen-Denmark.

In spite of the slow progress of negotiations, the 15<sup>th</sup> session Conference of head Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has already set some records.

For the 11 years of its inception, COP 15 had to be suspended for twice in lieu of informal meetings to enable parties to resolve outstanding issues.

Again, it will be first time more than 100 head states and governments will be attending a COP meeting in its entire history besides

On Sunday, December 6, 2009, the Secretariat recorded over 11,000 participants, totaling all the number of participants that have taken part in all its programmes over the last 10 years.

Meanwhile the Pan African Parliamentary Network on Climate Change have expressed concerned at the slow pace of progress of negotiations at the conference which it blamed on the uncompromising stand of the rich countries.

However, it warned that it would not sign any deal that will not be in favour of the people of continent.

It also accused the international media for sidelining developing countries and not highlighting their concerns as they do for the rich and developed countries.

Addressing the media here yesterday, the executive president of the Pan African Parliamentarians Network on Climate Change (PAPNCC), Awudu Mbaya Cyprian, said “we will rather sign not sign a bad deal than sign our death warrant.”

He said the G77 and China of which the African group is a member, would not be a signatory to any deal that will not advance the interest of Africa, saying, “Africa stands at the front line of climate change. Across the continent, -in villages, in towns, on coastlines -people battle daily with growing climate crisis,” he said.

According to him, climate change was a global problem and thus required global solution

“As Africans and as Parliamentarians, representatives of the people, we stand ready to play our part of controlling government actions and oversights and are also ready to design policies ...and are ready to take Copenhagen outcome for integration into our Parliaments for ratification and ensuring proper and timely implementation,” he stressed.

However, he said it was only when the outcome was fair enough to safeguard the development and rights of the people the group represented.

“We cannot thus watch as we gamble with the livelihoods of the poor people who are impacted by climate change, which they have not caused.

“Developed countries created the climate crisis as they became wealthy and they have the financial resources to tackle it. This gives them the double duty to act,” Mr. Awudu noted.