

UN climate change made progress on key issues, says official

Accra, Ghana (PANA) - The latest round of the United Nations global Climate Change Talks in Accra, Ghana, ended Wednesday with progress made on a number of key issues, to be finalised later at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2009.

"The highlight of this session is that governments have agreed to compile different proposals for solutions in a structured way for discussion at the next landmark meeting in Poznan (Poland)," Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) told reporters at the end

of the meeting.

The meeting constituted the third major UNFCCC negotiating session this year and was the last meeting in the run-up to this year's UN Climate Change Conference in Poznan, 1-12 December.

About 1,600 participants, including government delegates from 160 countries and representatives from environmental organisations, business and industry and research institutions, attended the one-week talks.

In a working group on long-term cooperative action under the UNFCCC, discussions took place on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries.

"Countries have made it very clear that issue of forests need to be part of a Copenhagen deal," de Boer said, adding "that's important because emissions from deforestation account for 20 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions."

For the first time at a UNFCCC gathering, governments discussed what is needed both in terms of financing and technology, to step up action on both reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

"Parties were deeply committed and submitted proposals for solutions on the issues," Luiz Figueiredo Machado, chair of the ad hoc working group on long-term cooperative action under the convention, said at the end of the meeting.

Machado explained that the proposals would now be assembled and submitted to the meeting in Poznan.

The working group under the Kyoto Protocol made good progress in the talks on the tools and rules that developed countries will have at their disposal to meet ambitious reduction targets after 2012.

Governments put together a clear list of options to improve the efficiency of clean development mechanism (CDM) and emissions trading and their contribution to sustainable development.

"All in all, the group has made good progress. It's important to take this progress forward in Poznan when we return to the issue of the ranges of emissions reductions for developed countries under the Kyoto Protocol," said Harald Dovland, the chair of ad hoc working group on further commitments for annex I parties under

the Kyoto Protocol.

Under the CDM, projects in developing countries can receive saleable certified emission reduction credits by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

These credits can be used by industrialised countries to cover a portion of their emission-reduction commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

"One of the CDM's shortcomings is that it is not leading to enough investments in Africa," said Yvo de Boer.

"There is a real risk of Africa becoming the forgotten continent in the context of the fight against climate change unless we manage to design a regime going into the future that takes into account, in a much more comprehensive way, what Africa's specific needs are not only on adaptation, but also on fuelling clean economic growth," he added.

At the Africa Carbon Forum in Dakar from 3 to 5 September, African countries will discuss what can be done to improve the CDM.

The forum is the first event of its kind to be held on the African continent and will include a carbon investment trade fair, conference and policy meeting.

Accra - 28/08/2008