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PRESS RELEASE

UN Climate Change Conference in Warsaw keeps governments on a track towards 2015 climate agreement

(Warsaw, 23 November 2013) The UN Climate Change Conference in Warsaw ended on Saturday, keeping governments on a track towards a universal climate agreement in 2015 and including significant new decisions that will cut emissions from deforestation and on loss and damage.

“Warsaw has set a pathway for governments to work on a draft text of a new universal climate agreement so it appears on the table at the next UN Climate change conference in Peru. This is an essential step to reach a final agreement in Paris, in 2015,” said Marcin Korolec, President of the COP19 conference.

In the context of 2015, countries decided to initiate or intensify domestic preparation for their intended national contributions towards that agreement, which will come into force from 2020. Parties ready to do this will submit clear and transparent plans well in advance of COP 21, in Paris, and by the first quarter of 2015.

Countries also resolved to close the pre-2020 ambition gap by intensifying technical work and more frequent engagement of Ministers.

The conference also decided to establish an international mechanism to provide most vulnerable populations with better protection against loss and damage caused by extreme weather events and slow onset events such as rising sea levels. Detailed work on the so-called “Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage” will begin next year.

“We have seen essential progress. But let us again be clear that we are witnessing ever more frequent, extreme weather events, and the poor and vulnerable are already paying the price,” said Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

“Now governments, and especially developed nations, must go back to do their homework so they can put their plans on the table ahead of the Paris conference,” she said.



In addition, governments provided more clarity on mobilizing finance to support developing country actions to curb emissions and adapt to climate change. This includes requesting developed countries to prepare biennial submissions on their updated strategies and approaches for scaling up finance between 2014 and 2020.

The Warsaw meeting also resulted in concrete announcements of forthcoming contributions of public climate finance to support developing nation action, including from Norway, the UK, EU, US, Republic of Korea, Japan, Sweden, Germany and Finland.

Meanwhile, the Green Climate Fund Board is to commence its initial resource mobilization process as soon as possible and developed countries were asked for ambitious, timely contributions by COP 20, in December, next year, to enable an effective operationalization.

Cutting emissions from deforestation

Today's agreements included a significant set of decisions on ways to help developing countries reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and the degradation of forests, which account for around one fifth of all human-generated emissions. The Warsaw Framework for REDD+ is backed by pledges of 280 million dollars financing from the US, Norway and the UK.

President Korolec said: "I am proud of this concrete accomplishment. We are all aware of the central role that forests play as carbon sinks, climate stabilizers and biodiversity havens. Through our negotiations we have made a significant contribution to forest preservation and sustainable use which will benefit the people who live in and around them and humanity and the planet as a whole. And I am proud that this instrument was named the Warsaw Framework for REDD+."

Further progress in help for developing nations

In Warsaw, a milestone was passed after 48 of the poorest countries of the world finalized a comprehensive set of plans to deal with the inevitable impacts of climate change. With these plans, the countries can better assess the immediate impacts of climate change and what they need in the way of support to become more resilient. Developed countries, including Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland have also paid or pledged over 100 million dollars to add to the Adaptation Fund, which has now started to fund national projects.

Governments completed work on the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) so that it can immediately respond to requests from developing countries for advice and assistance on the transfer of technology. The CTCN is open for business and is encouraging developing countries to set up focal points to accelerate the transfer of technology.



Climate action at all levels

COP19 has been a showcase for climate action by business, cities, regions and civil society.

The UNFCCC secretariat also celebrated its annual Momentum for Change lighthouse activity awards for climate actions that demonstrate positive results through innovative finance, by women and the urban poor. In addition, Momentum for Change launched a new initiative focusing on contributions by information and technology sector to curb emissions and increase adaptation capacity.

“A groundswell of action is happening at all levels of society. All major players came to COP19 to show not only what they have done but to think what more they can do. Next year is also the time for them to turn ideas into further concrete action,” Ms. Figueres said.

2014 New York Summit/ next UNFCCC meeting

In Warsaw, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon reiterated his invitation to all governments, and leaders from finance, business, local government and civil society, to a climate summit in New York on 23 September 2014. This will be a solutions summit, complementing the UNFCCC negotiations. “I ask all who come to bring bold and new announcements and action. By early 2015, we need those promises to add up to enough real action to keep us below the internationally agreed two degree temperature rise,” he said.

The next UNFCCC meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform is to take place in Bonn from 10 to 14, March, 2014.

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.

See also: unfccc.int

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