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PRESS RELEASE

UNFCCC Executive Secretary: Governments can and must deliver strong Copenhagen deal

(Barcelona, 6 November 2009) – The last negotiating session before the historic UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December concluded Friday in Barcelona, Spain.

Speaking at a press conference in Barcelona, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer reiterated that Copenhagen must result in a strong international climate change deal.

“Copenhagen can and must be the turning point in the international fight against climate change - nothing has changed my confidence in that,” he said. “A powerful combination of commitment and compromise can and must make this happen,” he added.

Specifically, progress on adaptation, technology cooperation, reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries and mechanisms to disburse funds for developing countries was made in Barcelona.

“It is essential that practical action is swiftly implemented after Copenhagen to assist developing countries in their fight against climate change,” the UN’s top climate change official said.

However, little progress was made on the two key issues of mid-term emission reduction targets of developed countries and finance that would allow developing countries to limit their emissions growth and adapt to the inevitable effects of climate change.

“Without these two pieces of the puzzle in place, we will not have a deal in Copenhagen,” Yvo de Boer said. “So leadership at the highest level is required to unlock the pieces,” he added.

At a summit in New York earlier this year, heads of state and government pledged to clinch a deal in Copenhagen that provides clarity on: ambitious emission reduction targets of industrialised countries; nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing countries with the necessary support; significantly scaled-up financial and technological resources and an equitable governance structure for these resources.

“I look to industrialised countries to raise their ambitions to meet the scale of the challenge we face,” said Yvo de Boer. “And I look to industrialised nations for clarity on the amount of short and long-term finance they will commit.”



According to Yvo de Boer, developed countries would need to provide fast-track funding on the order of at least 10 billion USD to enable developing countries to immediately develop low emission growth and adaptation strategies and to build internal capacity.

At the same time, developed countries will need to indicate how they intend to raise predictable and sustainable long-term financing and what their longer-term commitments will be.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, an aggregate emission reduction by industrialised countries of between minus 25% and 40% over 1990 levels would be required by 2020 in order to stave off the worst effects of climate change, with global emissions falling by at least 50% by 2050. Even under this scenario, there would be an only a 50% chance of avoiding the most catastrophic consequences.

"Negotiators must deliver a final text at Copenhagen which presents a strong, functioning architecture to kick start rapid action in the developing world," said Yvo de Boer. "And between now and Copenhagen, governments must deliver the clarity required to help the negotiators complete their work," he added.

More than 4,500 participants, including delegates from 181 countries, took part in the Barcelona UN Climate Change Talks.

The UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen will take place from 7 to 18 December.

Note to journalists

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