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PRESS RELEASE

UNFCCC Executive Secretary: Governments meeting in Bonn have responsibility to take next essential step in fight against climate change

(Bonn, 2 August 2010) – The third round of UN climate change negotiations this year kicked off on Monday with representatives from 178 governments meeting in Bonn, Germany. The Bonn UN Climate Change Conference (2 to 6 August) is designed to prepare the outcomes of the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancún in November and December.

“Governments have a responsibility this year to take the next essential step in the battle against climate change,” said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres. “How governments achieve the next essential step is up to them. But it’s politically possible. In Cancún, the job of governments is to turn the politically possible into the politically irreversible,” she said.

The government delegates will discuss the second iteration of the text to facilitate negotiations under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention (AWG-LCA). The negotiating group is tasked to deliver a long-term global solution to the climate challenge.

The Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) is also meeting in Bonn in parallel to the AWG-LCA. The focus of this group is on emissions reduction commitments for the 37 industrialised countries that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol for the period beyond 2012.

The UN’s top climate change official Christiana Figueres pointed to the opportunity to capture the promises, pledges and progress that governments have already made, in accountable and binding ways. According to Ms. Figueres, governments now need to resolve what to do with their public pledges to cut emissions. All industrialised countries have made public pledges to cut emissions by 2020 and 38 developing countries have submitted plans to limit their emissions growth.

“This needs to be captured in internationally agreed form,” the UN’s top climate change official said. “More stringent actions to reduce emissions cannot be much longer postponed and industrial nations must lead,” she added.

Ms. Figueres pointed out that governments agree to a comprehensive set of ways and means to allow developing countries to take concrete climate action.



This includes adapting to climate change, limiting emissions growth; providing adequate finance; boosting the use of clean technology; promoting sustainable forestry; and building up the skills and capacity to do all this.

The new UNFCCC Executive Secretary also noted the urgent need for industrialised nations to turn their pledges of funding into reality. Last year, these countries promised 30 billion dollars in fast-track finance for developing country adaptation and mitigation efforts through 2012.

"Developing nations see the allocation of this money as a critical signal that industrialised nations are committed to progress in the broader negotiations," Christiana Figueres said.

Industrialised countries further pledged to find ways and means to raise 100 billion dollars a year, by 2020.

"Governments need to achieve clarity on how institutional arrangements, particularly financial arrangements, lock into other issues," said Christiana Figueres. "For example, how could institutional arrangements for financing be linked most effectively to an operational technology mechanism or action on adaptation?" she said.

Ms. Figueres said that countries wanted to see that what they agree with each other is measured, reported and verified in a transparent and accountable way.

"It's called 'MRV' in the negotiations and it simply means that countries want to be confident that what they see is what they get," she said. "Progress here will be a gauge that countries are moving towards common ground," she said.

Finally, Christiana Figueres pointed to the fact that governments agree that pledges need to be captured in a binding manner but they need to decide how to do it.

"Governments need to deliver this combination of accountability and binding action so that civil society and business can be confident that clean, green strategies will be rewarded globally, as well as locally," the UNFCCC Executive Secretary said.

The Bonn gathering is being attended by around 3100 participants, including government delegates, representatives from business and industry, environmental organisations and research institutions.

The next UNFCCC negotiating session is scheduled to take place from 4 to 9 October in Tianjin, China, before the UN Climate Change Conference 29 November to 10 December in Cancún.

About the UNFCCC

With 194 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.