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Deep Pockets Needed for Climate Change Adaptation

BRUSSELS, Belgium, April 9, 2007 (ENS) - Global warming could trigger conflicts over water, the spread of diseases, and a big increase in worldwide migration unless adequate adaptation measures are developed and integrated into long-term development planning, according to the top UN climate change official, who stressed that dealing with these impacts will require adequate funding.

Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, was commenting on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, assessment of present and future impacts of climate change, released in Brussels on Friday. The report, "Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability," is the second of three IPCC reports due this year.

Yvo de Boer of the Netherlands is executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (Photo courtesy [Earth Negotiations Bulletin](#))



"These projected impacts tell us that we urgently need to launch an agreement on future international action to combat climate change, as well as look for effective ways to generate the funds needed for adaptation," said de Boer.

"According to some estimates, there are already almost as many environmentally displaced people on the planet as traditional refugees. As the impacts of climate change strike home, the numbers are likely to rise considerably, possibly as high as 50 million by 2010," he said.

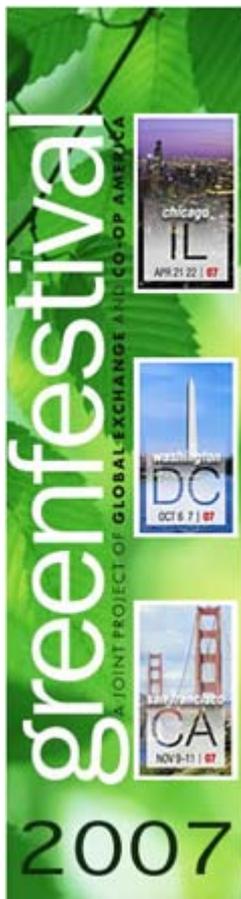
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Substantial financial resources will be needed to allow people to adapt, for example by coping with increased incidences of drought or relocating away from coastal areas endangered by rising sea levels.

"Our current sources of funding are insufficient to cover these adaptation needs," said de Boer. "So the international community needs to investigate new and innovative sources of finance, not least through the carbon market, in order to ensure that the most vulnerable communities are able to cope.

In many cases this financing, while addressing adaptation to climate change, will contribute to the economic and sustainable development of the communities, he said.

According to the IPCC assessment, the Earth is likely to warm by 3 degrees Celsius (4.5 degrees F) during this century, a temperature that would have negative consequences for biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services, such as water and food supply.

The assessment said that warmer global temperatures are causing profound changes in many of the Earth's natural systems, such increased run-off and peak discharge in many glacier and snow fed rivers.

Climate change is an economic, trade and security issue and will increasingly dominate global and national economic decision making, said de Boer.

At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Conference in December in Indonesia, Parties to the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol will agree on how to shape the post-2012 climate change regime under the auspices of the UN.

"This will be the opportunity for the international community to show commitment and to take action on adaptation and mitigation. Climate change will also be at the top of the agenda of heads of state at the upcoming G8 summit in Germany, so the appropriate political signals can already be sent from there," he said.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who has called climate change one of his top priorities, is urging nations to make decisive efforts to alleviate the worst consequences brought on by global warming.



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (Photo courtesy [UN](#))

"Adequate, large-scale adaptation

measures have the potential to alleviate some of the worst consequences outlined in the report, if governments take action without delay," Ban said in a statement.

Even before the IPCC assessment was released on Friday, development ministers of the world's most industrialized nations - the G8+5 - were making preparations to address the impacts of climate change at this year's G8 summit in Germany.

German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul said, "The consequences of climate change will be dramatic, for developing countries in particular. A large number of armed conflicts are already destabilizing these countries. The German presidency of the G8 aims to tackle these problems and adopt concrete initiatives."

On March 21, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, WBCSD, published its climate change policy paper, "Policy Directions to 2050." It asserts that the only way to combat climate change is through decisive, concerted and sustained actions between governments, businesses and consumers.

"Governments must start building the future policy frameworks, and it is necessary for us in business to begin to respond to those policies in time to meet the future emission reduction targets," said WBCSD President Björn Stigson. "We can not continue the 'you first' mentality. We need leadership and action by both governments and business."

"The world has reached an unsustainable trend in greenhouse gas emissions, so we now need to take action to decarbonize as much as possible the world's energy mix. Resources are to be used more efficiently at the same time as we meet growing energy needs," said Anne Lauvergeon, CEO of French nuclear energy company Areva and co-chair of the WBCSD's Energy and Climate Focus Area.



Anne Lauvergeon is CEO of the French nuclear energy company Areva. (Photo courtesy OECD)

"For that to happen one key element is to collectively define a global, long-term and quantifiable pathway for annual greenhouse gas emissions," she said. "This shared diagnosis could then be a point of reference for the development of national energy and climate policies."

In the United States, White House Council on Environmental Quality Chairman James Connaughton said, "Adaptation at its core is a fundamental component of the [Bush administration's] development strategy."

The United States and other developed nations are directing billions of development dollars toward the developing world, according to Connaughton, "training people so they can make smarter choices about land use, making agricultural practices more modern," increasing access to clean water and sanitation.

U.S. water resources planners and managers will assess the risks of regional climate changes and determine impacts to management practices during an American Water Works Association seminar set for April 20 in the desert city of Las Vegas, Nevada

The third part of the IPCC report, on curbing greenhouse gas emissions, is scheduled for release in May; the fourth, a final summation, is due in November.

"This groundswell of information is also pushing along a groundswell of additional policies and international cooperation," Connaughton said.

Indonesian Environment Minister Rachmat Witoelar and his government will host the 13th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali in December. (Photo courtesy ENB)



Meeting today in Jakarta, Indonesia, the Australian Environment and Water Resources Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Indonesian Forestry Minister M.S.

Kaban and Indonesian Environment Minister Rachmat Witoelar underscored the two governments' recognition that climate change is a global challenge.

"Action to reduce deforestation can increase the forests' capacity to absorb carbon, including through reducing land and forest fires, and decrease global greenhouse gas emissions," the ministers said.

Indonesia will host the 13th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali in December. At this conference, Australia and Indonesia will be working together on the issues of adaptation, mitigation and deforestation, the ministers said.



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