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PRESS RELEASE

Bangkok climate talks make concrete progress on key issues ahead of Doha

(Bangkok, 5 September 2012) – A week of informal climate talks in Bangkok ended today with concrete progress on key issues across all three negotiating groups, setting a firmer base for decisions that will be made at the UN Climate Change Conference this year, in Doha.

“The investment in Bangkok has paid off. Government negotiators have pushed forward key issues further than many had expected and raised the prospects for a next successful step in Doha,” said Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

“There are still some tough political decisions ahead, but we now have a positive momentum and a greater sense of convergence that will stimulate higher-level political discussions ahead of Doha and set a faster pace of work once this year’s conference begins,” she said.

At the 2011 UNFCCC conference, in Durban, South Africa, nations set specific objectives for their 2012 meeting in Doha, Qatar (26 November to 7 December). These include essential work to trigger a new phase of greater climate action and to take the next concrete steps to fill existing gaps in the international policy response to climate change. Progress in Bangkok in each of the three negotiating groups addressed these objectives.

Under the Kyoto Protocol (Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol – AWG-KP), the objective is to amend the existing Kyoto treaty under which industrialised countries commit to emissions cuts, so that it continues into a second commitment period next year and its important international infrastructure and accounting rules are preserved.

In Bangkok, this working group under their Chair, Ms. Madeleine Diouf:

- produced an unofficial paper outlining the elements of a final decision as they might appear under these amendments, which involves the construction of a fine and detailed set of legal checks and balances,
- drilled down into the detail of what needs to be done to resolve differences of opinion over the length of the second commitment period and reach compromise.

Parties under the AWG-KP also called for the Chair to produce a negotiating text in time before the Doha session, to allow for further work in national capitals before coming to Doha.



The group that negotiates under the full UN Climate Change Convention (The Ad hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action – AWG-LCA) has an objective to close its work in Doha. This work began in 2007 and has resulted in a set of international agreements that aim to limit the average global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius (beyond which climate change becomes increasingly dangerous), to reduce greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to achieve this and to establish an adequate support system to provide developing countries with finance and technology to build their own sustainable, clean energy futures.

In Bangkok, there was significant progress in a number of areas, including:

- plans for a new market-based and other possible mechanism, meant to boost international cooperation on climate action,
- the shape of the agreed international scientific Review from 2013, which is to be a reality check on the advance of the climate change threat,
- also finance on REDD-plus, which is the international cooperative programme to preserve and enhance the world's forests.

The group identified points where they might need additional decisions in Doha in order to close successfully. This includes finance to support developing countries efforts to deal with climate change.

The results of the group's work have been captured in an informal overview prepared by the AWG-LCA Chair, Mr. Aysar Tayeb. This is intended to help clarity and further convergence.

The third group is the new negotiating body (Ad hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action – AWG-ADP), which was agreed in Durban and is tasked to take the next steps necessary to negotiate a global climate change agreement to be adopted by 2015 and enter into force from 2020, and how to raise current inadequate global ambition to deal with climate change, including cutting greenhouse gas emissions even faster.

In Bangkok, governments began to outline their vision for this new universal agreement and to identify concrete actions to bridge the ambition gap. This included preliminary discussions on:

- the design of the new agreement to be adopted by 2015, how they envisage its broad contours and architectural features under the principles of the Convention, and how to deal with differing national circumstances in shaping an effective, fair, ambitious agreement,
- identifying further concrete actions to raise ambition before 2020 to stay on track to hold below the 2 degrees maximum temperature rise.

“Discussions in the ADP at the Bangkok climate talks have succeeded in building confidence among governments on the new process, providing a strong basis for further work in subsequent years,” the group's Co-Chairs, Mr. Jayant Moreshever Mauskar and Mr. Harald Dovland, said.

The location of the Bangkok meeting (to 5 September 2012) was the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).



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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 193 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.

See also: <<http://unfccc.int/press/items/2794.php>>

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