

Press conference, UN Climate Change Conference, Bangkok, 4 April 2011

I would like to welcome you to the first intergovernmental climate meeting this year, and certainly to thank Thailand for again hosting a climate conference here. It's always a pleasure to be able to celebrate these conferences here.

Ladies and gentlemen, Governments have the early opportunity, here in Bangkok, to push ahead to complete the work they agreed to in Cancun, and to chart a way forward that will ensure renewed success in Durban.

If they move forward in the continued spirit of flexibility and compromise that inspired them in Cancun, I am confident that they will be able to make significant new progress this year.

In Cancun, governments set a timetable to launch new institutions and sources of funding and technology to help developing countries deal comprehensively and sustainably with climate change. This is exactly the concrete work that needs to be rapidly advanced.

In Cancun, governments also expressly agreed that the global average temperature rise should not exceed two degrees.

But their work to create the long-term political certainty that would drive the higher emission cuts required to meet this temperature goal is not yet complete.

Countries have formally put forward their national plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but the sum of these efforts still falls short of the required, long-term effort.

The sum of national promises so far equals only 60 percent of what science says is required to have a medium chance of staying below the two degree goal.

Moreover, a coordinated system to manage and deploy enough resources to protect the poor and vulnerable from existing climate change is not yet adequate.

So, during this year, governments have two main tasks to address these shortfalls:

First, they need to resolve fundamental issues over the future of the Kyoto Protocol - the only existing agreement where almost all industrialised countries agreed internationally-binding commitments to reduce emissions over time.

The first period of these commitments under the protocol expires at the end of 2012 and governments have to face the fact that a gap in this effort looks increasingly impossible to avoid.

In 2011, they need to figure out how to address this issue and how to take it forward in a collective and inclusive way.

Resolving this will create a firmer foundation for an even greater collective ambition to cut emissions.

Second, governments need to complete their agreed work to ensure the broader global climate regime which Cancun designed is functioning and effective in 2012.

That means delivering agreed actions and institutions on time to ensure the deadlines set out in the Cancun Agreements are met.

And there I would like to point out for you that we already had one workshop on economy-wide emission reduction targets from developed countries yesterday, which was very well received and was very helpful to explain those actions on the part of developed countries.

Today we're having a workshop on nationally appropriate mitigation actions of developing countries and on the technology mechanism, both running at the same time. So that's already the start of the work for this year on the part of Governments.

There is much to be done this year, but I remain confident that countries, with the necessary political will, will be able to achieve what they need to this year.