



Climate change talks enter final week

Copenhagen, Denmark (PANA) - As the UN Climate Change Conference in the Danish capital, Copenhagen, entered its second and final week Monday, billions of people around the world are eagerly awaiting the negotiations to deliver a fair, ambitious, binding and timely global deal.

This week, the conference will be joined by ministers from around the world, and the proceedings are expected to take a giant step forward in addressing climate change.

Ahead of the final debate, rallies were held around the world over the weekend, with hundreds of thousands of people from 140 countries calling for 'climate justice'.

Among the crunch issues that the negotiators need to resolve are enhanced action to assist the most vulnerable and the poorest to adapt to the impacts of climate change and ambitious emission reduction targets for industrialised countries.

The conference also needs to address nationally-appropriate mitigation actions by developing countries with the necessary support, significantly scaled-up financial and technological resources.

The current aggregate target for developed countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions is a paltry 10-17 percent by 2020 based on 1990 levels. They need to be increased to 40 percent and right now the meeting is discussing a range of 25-45 percent cuts.

There is also the issue of US\$140 billion a year needed to be paid for developing world climate action, adaptation and mitigation, and an end to tropical deforestation by 2020.

There are also proposals on the table that could lead to an amended Kyoto Protocol and a Copenhagen Protocol. Most observers here say a legally binding outcome is vital for the survival of millions of people.

The deal to be clinched here will follow on the first phase of the UN's Kyoto Protocol which expires in 2012.

Greenpeace on Monday called on world leaders to listen to the people and the science, and agree on the fair, ambitious and legally binding climate deal the world is waiting for.

"This is it. Around 120 heads of state will arrive with the task of agreeing a deal to avert catastrophic climate change. This week we will see history made - for good or for bad," said Martin Kaiser, Climate Policy Director for Greenpeace International.

"Will our leaders have the courage and vision to agree a real deal to save the climate, or will they continue to play poker with the planet? They cannot come to Copenhagen just to make grand statements which play to their domestic audiences while failing the planet," he added.

Greenpeace said the leaders from Germany, United Kingdom and United States are the ones the world will be watching out for this week, charging that they all will arrive with inadequate emission reduction targets and peanuts in terms of the finance needed for the developing world.

According to Jeremy Hobbs, Executive Director of Oxfam International, the negotiations are stuck and rich countries will not budge on climate cash or emissions targets and the big players do not want to talk about the kind of deal that will come out the end of the week.

"We desperately need world leaders to get a grip on these issues now. All countries will need to give a little if we are going to get a deal in time. The big question is whether those with the furthest to go - the rich countries - are ready to play catch up," Hobbs said Monday.

“We know what is needed: sharp emissions cuts, US\$200bn a year in new money to help poor countries tackle climate change and guarantees of action. We will have over 100 of the world’s most powerful people in one place. We have a golden opportunity to avert climate disaster. It must not be wasted,” he added.

As Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, said, “a climate deal in Copenhagen is an unequivocal requirement to stop climate change from slipping out of control.”

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