



Govts set to seal ambitious climate change deal in Copenhagen

By Mildred Mulenga, PANA Correspondent Copenhagen, Denmark (PANA) - The United Nations top climate change official has expressed confidence that the historic UN Climate Change Conference which began Monday in the Danish capital, Copenhagen, will deliver a comprehensive, ambitious and effective international climate change deal.

"Within two weeks from Monday, governments must give their adequate response to the urgent challenge of climate change," the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) executive secretary, Yvo de Boer, said shortly before the summit began.

"Negotiators now have the clearest signal ever from world leaders to craft solid proposals to implement rapid action," he added.

Referring to numerous emission reduction pledges that developing and developed countries have made in the run-up to the Copenhagen Conference (COP 15), de Boer said there was unprecedented political momentum to clinch an ambitious deal in Copenhagen.

"Never in 17 years of climate negotiations have so many different nations made so many firm pledges together," he said, adding "So whilst there will be more steps on the road to a safe climate future, Copenhagen is already a turning point in the international response to climate change."

Yvo de Boer unveiled three layers of action that governments must agree to in the course of the coming two weeks -- fast and effective implementation of immediate action on climate change, ambitious commitments to cut and limit emissions, including start-up funding and a long-term funding commitment, and a long-term shared vision on a low-emissions future for all.

As of 2010, immediate action will need to begin on reducing emissions, adapting to the inevitable effects of climate change, delivering adequate finance, technology, reducing emission from deforestation in developing countries and capacity-building.

According to the UN top climate change official, developed countries will need to provide fast-track funding on the order of at least US\$ 10 billion a year through 2012 to enable developing countries to immediately plan and launch low emission growth and adaptation strategies and to build internal capacity.

At the same time, developed countries will need to indicate how they intend to raise predictable and sustainable long-term financing and what their longer-term commitments will be.

Stressing the issue of immediate action, Michael Zammit Cutajar, Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention, said: "Copenhagen must be a success that delivers the promise of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, that will change the way we act and cooperate in addressing climate change."

According to the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, an aggregate emission reduction by industrialized countries of between about minus 25 per cent over 1990 levels would be required by 2020 in order to stave off the worst effects of climate change, with global emissions falling by at least 50 per cent by 2050.

Even under this scenario, there would be only a 50 per cent chance of avoiding the most catastrophic consequences.

John Ashe, Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I (industrialized)

Parties under the Kyoto Protocol, spoke both of the need to raise the level of ambition of developed countries with regard to individual targets

and the need to make rapid progress on the tools and rules that developed countries can use to reach their targets, such as carbon market mechanisms, land use and land use change and new gases.

"A strong, clear agreement that incorporates all the outstanding issues under the Kyoto Protocol will have to be part of a successful Copenhagen agreement," he said.

More than 15,000 participants, including delegates from 192 countries, are taking part in the Conference lasting from 7-18 December.

By Mildred Mulenga - 07/12/2009