



## **Fact sheet: What is the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP/CMP)?**

The negotiating process on climate change revolves around the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP), which meets every year to review the implementation of the Convention. The COP adopts decisions and resolutions, published in reports of the COP. Successive decisions taken by the COP make up a detailed set of rules for practical and effective implementation of the Convention.

The COP serves as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), which also adopts decisions and resolutions on the implementation of its provision.

Thousands of participants including government representatives and observer organizations have attended previous climate change conferences. The sessions in Copenhagen attracted over 24,000 participants, including some 10,590 government officials, over 13,000 representatives of UN bodies and agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and 3,221 accredited members of the media. The UN Climate Change Conference in Cancun last year had over 11,800 participants.

Expressions of interest or invitations to host a climate change conference come from the governments of a prospective host country and are decided by the Conference of the Parties. At COP 14/CMP 4 in Poznan, Poland, the government of South Africa extended an invitation to host COP 17/CMP 7. The COP/CMP accepted this offer.

Following the procedural rules of the Conference, the office of President normally rotates among the **five UN regional groups** and in 2011 the Conference will be hosted by the African Group. The last time Africa held the Presidency of the Conference was in 2006 (COP 12/CMP 2 in Nairobi, Kenya).

When the sessions are held at the invitation of a host country, it is customary for the COP and CMP to elect as President a Minister from that country. The current COP/CMP President is Patricia Espinosa, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Mexico.

Following technical missions to assess the facilities at the venue envisaged by the host country, the Government and the UNFCCC concluded a Host Country Agreement indicating all the facilities and equipment needed.

Participation in COP 17 and CMP 7 is restricted to duly nominated representatives of Parties, observer States, accredited observer organizations and accredited press/media. Those Parties to the Convention that are not Parties to the Protocol may participate as observers in the meeting of the Parties.

All Conferences to date have had a high-level segment attended by anywhere from 70 to 100 ministers and senior officials, usually at the end of the session. The high-level segment normally includes an opening or welcoming event with some head of state participation and is partly attended the Secretary-General of the United Nations.