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### **Nairobi United Nations Climate Change Conference opens with warning that climate change may be most serious threat ever to face humankind**

(6 November 2006) – The United Nations Climate Change Conference - Nairobi 2006 got underway today with calls for action and a stark warning that climate change is fast proving to be one of the greatest challenges in the history of humankind.

“Climate change is rapidly emerging as one of the most serious threats that humanity may ever face,” said the President of the conference, Kenyan Environment Minister Kivutha Kibwana.

The two-week conference, the twelfth Conference of the 189 Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the second meeting of the 166 Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, is the first UN climate summit in sub-Saharan Africa and is expected to draw around five thousand participants.

Warning that global warming threatened the development goals for billions of the world’s poorest people, conference President Kibwana said:

“We face a genuine danger that recent gains in poverty reduction will be thrown into reverse in coming decades, particularly for the poorest communities on the continent of Africa.”

The conference President went on to say that for these communities, scarce resources that would otherwise be channelled into essential projects to further economic development would instead be used for other emergencies, such as health care crises, water shortages or food stock failures.

President Kibwana called on Parties meeting in Nairobi to work together to ensure that real action is achieved on the issue of adaptation to climate change.

“Past and current greenhouse gas emission levels have already committed us to at least some level of temperature increase, and therefore a certain level of adaptation measures will be needed as a result,” he said.



The UNFCCC's Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer called for specific activities to be agreed within the five-year work plan on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation.

"We expect countries to take decisions in Nairobi that will enhance action on adaptation on the ground," he said.

Another key outcome expected of the conference is agreement on how to manage the UNFCCC's Adaptation Fund. The Fund is financed by a share of proceeds generated by the Kyoto Protocol's clean development mechanism (CDM).

The CDM permits industrialized countries which are members of the Protocol to invest in sustainable development projects in developing countries, and thereby generate tradable emission credits.

"Ministers meeting in Nairobi have an opportunity to reach agreement on critical elements of the governance and management of the Adaptation Fund," the United Nations' top climate change official said.

Conference President Kivutha Kibwana called on the meeting to address the key obstacles faced by the least developed countries, in particular those in Africa, in participating successfully in the CDM.

He added that after a successful start in May 2006 in Bonn, discussion on future action to mitigate climate change will continue in Nairobi.

One track is for negotiating commitments beyond 2012 for countries under the Kyoto Protocol, the other deals with talks under the UNFCCC on the future of the climate change process, with a focus on how to advance development in a sustainable way and on how to realize the full potential of market-based opportunities.

Kivutha Kibwana called for the burden of mitigation to be borne according to each country's responsibility. Said Minister Kibwana,

"We need an equitable and effective future climate change regime that enables us to stabilize atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases while at the same time allowing economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner," he said.

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