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PRESS RELEASE

High-level Segment of the United Nations Climate Change Conference - Poznań, Poland set to kick off

(Poznań, 10 December 2008) – Ministers from the 189 countries attending the United Nations Climate Change Conference - Poznań, Poland will converge for first time since the landmark UN climate meeting in Bali to discuss a path forward toward a new global climate change deal.

The High-level Segment of the gathering of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) gathering is set to kick off Thursday with speeches by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, four Heads of State and Government, as well as 145 Environment Ministers and senior government representatives.

The Poznań conference, which has drawn 11,600 participants, constitutes the half-way mark in the negotiations on an ambitious and effective international response to climate change, to be agreed in Copenhagen at the end of 2009 and to take effect in 2013, the year after the first phase of the Kyoto Protocol expires.

"The agreed outcome must spell out commitments on the part of industrialised countries, including mid-term emission reduction targets, and agree ways to raise large-scale funds and deliver them effectively and transparently to support the efforts of the developing world in mitigation and adaptation. So we need a policy framework that provides clarity on targets, clarity on financial support and clarity on institutions," said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer. "We must have a politically ratifiable outcome that can enter into force in 2013," he added.

The discussion has in Poznań meanwhile moved on from elements of the agreed outcome to concrete components, describing areas of convergence in the ideas and proposals of Parties, exploring options for dealing with areas of divergence and identifying the gaps that might need to be filled in reaching the agreed Copenhagen outcome. Parties have agreed that that a negotiating text on the agreed outcome will be put forward for consideration at a UNFCCC gathering in June next year.

A key event during the High-Level Segment will be a ministerial round table on a shared vision on long-term cooperative action on climate change.

"Negotiators have been discussing a number of issues that are important in the short run - up to 2012 - particularly for developing countries, including adaptation, finance, technology and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation," said the UN's top climate change official Yvo de Boer.



“The round table event will be an important opportunity for both for Ministers and heads of delegations to look at what kind of mechanisms need to be put in place to deliver on finance, on technology and on capacity building to curb emissions, spur green growth and to cope with the inevitable impacts of climate change,” he added.

At least three major UNFCCC gatherings will take place next year before the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, the first two in Bonn, Germany (29 March - 08 April and 1 - 12 June).

About the UNFCCC

With 192 Parties, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has to date 183 member Parties. Under the Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialized countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments. The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

Note to journalists

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