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PRESS RELEASE

Barcelona UN Climate Change Talks to put in place solid foundation for success at Copenhagen

(Barcelona, 2 November 2009) – The last negotiating session before the historic UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December kicked off Monday in Barcelona, Spain.

The meeting in Barcelona (2 to 6 November) follows on the UN Climate Change Talks in Bangkok (28 September to 9 October), which saw increasing convergence, streamlining of negotiating text and narrowing down of options for a comprehensive, fair and effective international climate change deal.

“The Barcelona talks need to make clear progress and put in place a solid foundation for success at Copenhagen,” said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer. “We have only five days to achieve this, only five days to further narrow down options and come up with working texts. But I am convinced that it can be done,” he added.

Alluding to a meeting of around 35 Environment Ministers ahead of the Barcelona talks, Danish Minister for Climate and Energy Connie Hedegaard said: “Ministers promised to instruct negotiators to be flexible and constructive towards a Copenhagen outcome.”

“Striking a deal is not easy now. But it will not be easier next year or the year after,” she added.

Specifically, progress on adaptation, technology cooperation, action to reduce emissions from deforestation in developing countries and enhanced capacity building is expected in Barcelona.

“Workable middle ground options have emerged on these items that can be taken forward and concretised,” said Yvo de Boer. “The good work needs to be continued, especially in view of preparing the ground for prompt implementation now and up to 2012.”

Heads of state and government meeting in New York earlier this year agreed that in Copenhagen, clarity must be provided on ambitious emission reduction targets of industrialised countries, as well as the need for nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing countries with the necessary support.

A beacon to guide discussions is the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s finding that an aggregate emission reduction by industrialised countries of between minus 25% and 40% over 1990 levels would be required by 2020, and that global emissions would need to be reduced by at least 50% by 2050, in order to stave off the worst effects of climate change.



"The targets of industrialised countries that are presently on the table are clearly not ambitious enough," the UN's top climate change official said. "We therefore need more ambitious targets on an individual basis and urgent progress on the negotiations under the Kyoto Protocol," he added.

Heads of State and Government agreed in September at a UN climate summit in New York that Copenhagen must generate significantly scaled-up financial and technological resources, with a mechanism that would allow funds to be generated automatically over time, along with an equitable governance structure that manages and deploys those funds in line with the adaptation and mitigation needs of developing countries.

"The magnitude of long-term finance has been recognised, but more clarity on precise contributions from industrialised countries is needed ahead of Copenhagen, above all clarity on what the prompt start-up finance will be to unleash urgent action in developing countries," Yvo de Boer said.

More than 4,000 participants, including delegates from 181 countries, have registered for the UN Climate Change Talks in Barcelona. The UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen will take place in Copenhagen from 7 to 18 December.

"Copenhagen must open the door to the common good and close the door to a common disaster," said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer.

"And in Denmark, governments must give their clear realistic answer both on what they will do to avoid catastrophic climate change and how to do it, along with delivering a strong, functioning architecture to kick-start rapid action in the developing world," he added.

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 been ratified by 189 of the UNFCCC 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.

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