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PRESS RELEASE

UN recognizes momentum for stronger international and national action on climate by showcasing “Lighthouse Projects” in developing countries

(Bonn, 22 November 2011) The secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is seeking to acknowledge the increasing momentum for stronger international and national action on climate change by highlighting projects in developing countries that help put the world on a more climate-resilient and low-carbon path, whilst demonstratively improving peoples’ lives.

A new initiative dubbed ‘Momentum for Change’ will be launched at the UN Climate Change Conference in Durban (28 November to 9 December 2011) to showcase efforts that are already benefitting communities and families, while being successful in either increasing resilience or reducing emissions. The first series of these “Lighthouse Projects” focuses on effective public-private partnerships benefitting the world’s poorest citizens.

Key criteria for the selection of the projects is that they contribute towards fighting poverty, can be replicated in other countries and can be scaled-up.

Examples of projects that will be showcased include the retrieval of valuable drinking water from mining activities, the distribution of clean cook stoves in African countries, providing farmers in the Horn of Africa with micro-insurance against crop failure resulting from droughts and floods, and the use of solar “bottle lights” to bring light into homes in the Philippines.

“People in developing countries are more willing to take action on climate change when they are at the same time able to reduce poverty. It is therefore essential that awareness is created about these beacons of opportunity, which shed a light on what people are doing on the ground at national, regional and local level to creatively and effectively respond to the challenge,” said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres, the UN’s top climate change official.

The new initiative is also designed to bolster international climate change action.

“Given that many people and organizations are already doing fantastic work, I believe that governments can take heart and be more ambitious in their national and international climate policies when they see to what extent curbing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing poverty can be two sides of the same coin,” Ms. Figueres said. “It is essential that progress is made both on climate finance and curbing emissions in Durban. And governments need to get a better sense of what is possible, given the right type of support,” she added.



The first stage of the Momentum for Change Initiative, with a geographic focus on least developed countries in Africa, is supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

“Rapidly expanding populations and changes in consumption patterns are placing unprecedented strain on our cities, creating huge solid waste management challenges and further marginalizing the poorest citizens,” said Melanie Walker, Deputy Director for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s Urban Development Special Initiative. “Through this partnership, we aim to support efforts to identify and scale innovations that are carbon-friendly and economically viable. From the foundation’s perspective, we are especially interested in identifying ways to use carbon credits as an innovative source of revenue to fund pro-poor urban development efforts,” she added.

The launch event on the evening of 6 December in Durban during UNFCCC’s COP17 will be attended by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and South African President Jacob Zuma. Similar showcase events are to be held at UN climate change conferences over the next three years. Virtual products, such as online videos, are to be used alongside physical events in order to ensure the widest possible dissemination and engagement with stakeholders.

More information on the initiative, including examples of projects and an explanation of how they are selected, as well as details of the launch event on 6 December, can be found on the UNFCCC web site at: http://unfccc.int/secretariat/momentum_for_change/items/6214.php

Ms. Figueres will chat on Twitter about the role of business and public-private partnerships in fighting climate change on 22 November, 16:00 - 17:00 CET (Berlin time). Users can follow @CFigueres and the hashtag #climatebiz to participate: <http://unfccc.int/home/items/6550.php>

About the UNFCCC

With 195 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 193 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.

See also: unfccc.int

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