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PRESS RELEASE

June UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn sees concrete progress toward new agreement and speeding up climate action

(Bonn, 14 June 2013) – The UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany, ended on Friday after making concrete progress towards a new universal climate change agreement and on creating solutions to increase existing global action to deal with climate change.

The “Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action” (ADP), tasked to design the new agreement and to raise near-term global ambition to deal with climate change, was meeting for the second time this year.

“Over the past 12 months, solid foundations have been laid under the process both toward the 2015 agreement and in raising pre-2020 ambition. As a result of the constructive and flexible engagement amongst governments, nations now have a clearer idea of how to move to achieve demonstrable progress at the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference in Poland and beyond” the Co-Chairs of the group, Jayant Moreshver Mauskar and Harald Dovland said in a joint statement.

A key focus of the ADP negotiation in Bonn was on how to transform the world’s energy systems quickly enough towards low-carbon, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and the consideration of carbon capture and storage.

“This has been an important meeting because governments are moving faster now from the stage of exploring options to designing and implementing solutions. Governments are demonstrating increasingly broad support for this energy transformation. It is achievable with existing financial and technology resources, encourages best efforts by all countries without shifting the leadership responsibility of developed countries to respond to climate change, and mobilizes and speeds action at all levels – international, domestic and private sector,” said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres.

An immediate need recognized by all governments is how climate finance can shift investment patterns faster toward low carbon. In Bonn, governments examined key elements for such a shift, including reducing investment risk for investors, public-private partnerships, a long-term legally binding agreement and strong domestic institutions to deal effectively with finance in countries which receive support.



“The record greenhouse gas concentrations we now see in the atmosphere are due to past investment patterns and the policies and profit motives behind them. To prevent our atmosphere turning permanently against us requires a continued, faster shift in those investment patterns and the policies and price signals that drive them,” said Ms Figueres.

In Bonn, governments also looked in greater detail at how the rules of the new agreement, which is to be decided by 2015 and come into effect in 2020, have to be designed to encourage countries to do their best to act on climate change in the longer term. This includes views on how transparency and accountability should be reflected in the 2015 agreement, including a possible process to assess and adjust national efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change. There was a strong sense that internationally agreed rules to ensure transparency of increased actions and commitments are needed up front.

They also examined specific means to increase finance, technology and capacity-building for developing countries, and how this can link to the 2015 agreement. In this context, they heard a series of reports from new institutions, including the Green Climate Fund, on how the infrastructure is starting to take shape and deliver results.

Detailed and productive technical discussions took place under the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). Progress was made on ways to protect the world’s forests, the role of agriculture in responding to climate change and reporting guidelines (see below for a further detailed summary of outcomes).

The work of the SBI body, tasked to give advice to the Conference of the Parties (COP), the UNFCCC’s decision-making body on all matters concerning the implementation of the Convention, had been earlier suspended without governments formally adopting an agenda for the body’s work at this two-week session. The SBI is scheduled to have a final plenary on Friday.

“The delay in the SBI has not stopped progress in the rest of the meeting, “ said UNFCCC’s Christiana Figueres. “I now strongly encourage all sides to reach a mutually agreeable solution to this issue as soon as possible,” she said.

In Bonn, governments agreed on an additional ADP session in the first half of 2014, and on the type of technical information governments need to provide to make further progress under the ADP. Two new ADP Co-Chairs were elected: Artur Runge-Metzger (European Union) and Kshan Kumarsingh (Trinidad and Tobago).

The outgoing ADP Co-Chairs Jayant Moreshver Mauskar (India) and Harald Dovland (Norway) said: “we are honoured to be the first set of Co-chairs of the ADP and are leaving the work of the group in the safe hands of our able successors”.

The next UN Climate Change Conference will be COP 19 in Poland (11-22 November, 2013).



Peru has offered to host COP 20 in 2014, and Venezuela the pre-COP next year. The Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC) endorsed the offer of the two countries.

Further outcomes of the Bonn UN Climate Change Conference in detail:

Designing the post-2020 agreement

- Governments focused on what the rules need to be before emission reduction pledges are made as part of the 2015 agreement.
- In Bonn, governments explained further their views on how transparency and accountability should be reflected in the 2015 agreement, including: possible process to assess and adjust efforts of governments to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change over time. There was a strong sense that those internationally agreed rules to ensure transparency of increased actions and commitments are needed up front.
- They also looked at how to enhance adaptation through the 2015 agreement in a manner that achieves balance between adaptation and efforts to reduce emissions, including through strengthening existing institutions, arrangements and support.
- Governments discussed how the 2015 climate agreement can link to the suite of support systems and institutions under the UNFCCC framework, such as the Green Climate Fund and Technology Mechanism.

Raising near-term climate ambition

- An immediate need recognized by all governments is how climate finance can shift investment patterns faster toward low carbon. In Bonn, governments examined key elements for such a shift, including: reducing investment risk for investors, public-private partnerships, a long-term legally binding agreement and strong domestic institutions in recipient countries.
- On the margins of the meeting in Bonn, the IEA report “Redrawing the Energy Climate Map” was presented to governments, and was well-received for its pragmatic and feasible approach. Four basic and achievable policies set out in the report were: improving energy efficiency in buildings, industry and transport; cutting construction and use of least-efficient coal plants; minimizing methane emissions from oil and natural gas production and accelerating phase-out of some fossil-fuel consumption subsidies.
- In Bonn, governments also had a serious debate on how to mobilize the Montreal Protocol in coordination with the Convention to reduce HFC use further. The debate underlines the large opportunities to leverage greater action through linking existing international efforts.



Other key issues

Forests

- In SBSTA, governments made concrete progress on support for actions taken by developing countries to reduce emissions related to the forest sector.
- They agreed text for two draft decisions and advanced work on other draft decisions for COP19 related to the essential measuring and accounting rules which will drive action.
- They also held two workshops on institutional arrangements and on finance for forests.

Transparency and accountability

- Discussions continued on the clarification of quantified economy-wide emission reduction targets by developed countries, with a specific view to measuring progress towards reaching these targets and ensuring comparability of effort.

Reality check of the 2 degrees Celsius goal

- In Bonn, the 2013-2015 review of the adequacy of the agreed goal of a maximum 2 degrees Celsius temperature rise began. As a reality check, the review is also designed to assess progress towards achieving the goal. The World Meteorological Organization explained how climate change is accelerating and how currently observed impacts correspond to the worst-case scenarios developed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in the 1990s.

Capacity building

- Discussions included capacity building for the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, capacity-building for UNFCCC support systems, and improved capacity-building for adaptation action in developing countries and efforts to curb emissions at the national level.

Response measures

- Discussions were held on how to avoid negative consequences of climate action, among other things focusing on the issue of a just transition of the workforce as economies decarbonize, and the creation of quality jobs.

Agriculture

- Governments defined the scope of consideration of agriculture in fighting climate change and on next steps with regard to the issue, including submissions by Parties and an inter-sessional workshop.

Research dialogue

- A dialogue was held on developments in research activities relevant to the needs of governments. The dialogue focused on developments in global climate information, emerging scientific findings, as well as developments in research-related capacity-building.



Education and public awareness

- Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations exchanged knowledge and experiences in order to promote education, training and public awareness on climate action.

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 192 of the UNFCCC Parties. For the first commitment period of the Kyoto 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: <<http://unfccc.int/press/items/2794.php>>

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