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## UN Climate Chief Confident on Bali Progress

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SINGAPORE - The UN's top climate change official said on Tuesday he was confident world governments meeting in Bali next month would finally begin negotiations on mapping out a second plan to fight global warming.

A successor to the Kyoto Protocol to curb greenhouse gas emissions must be established by 2009, three years before Kyoto runs out, Yvo de Boer, the head of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, told Reuters in an interview.

"Bali needs to launch a negotiating agenda, decide that negotiations need to begin on a post-2012 climate change policy, launch that process formally, decide what the main elements that need to be negotiated are, set a timetable for negotiations and like every good timetable, set an end date," de Boer said.

"The end date should be 2009," said de Boer, whose job it is to moderate between countries trying to work out a post-2012 deal.

De Boer was confident the meeting in Bali, Indonesia, could achieve these goals and would send a positive signal to markets in trading carbon emissions.

Companies earn credits for cutting emissions, which they can then sell to individuals, businesses or governments that want to cut their impact on global warming.

"If it doesn't, that would be a huge setback, in the sense that we have now an important report from the scientific community from which to take political decisions and it could well be another six years before you get another report. So this really is a unique moment," he added.

The Bali meeting follows three reports this year by the U.N Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which shared the Nobel Peace Prize in October with former US Vice President Al Gore.

The first said there was 90 percent probability that global warming was real, that human activities caused it and that the problem was urgent. The second detailed the potentially disastrous consequences of unchecked climate change and the third focused on what to do about it.

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The Kyoto Protocol, whose first phase expires in 2012, binds 36 rich nations to cap greenhouse gas emissions, and a new global deal would seek to engage outsiders such as the United States and Australia, as well as developing countries such as China and India.

Big developing nations, including Brazil, Mexico and Indonesia, are major polluters yet they are excluded from mandatory cuts in greenhouse gas emissions under Kyoto's first phase.

China is the top emitter of carbon dioxide after the United States. Russia is third, India fourth and Japan is fifth.

"Designing a climate change regime that does not involve the United States just does not make any sense," he said.

"So we have to, in designing that regime, listen very carefully to America and try to find out what would be acceptable to America and what's not."

The Bush administration and Australia opposed mandatory limits on carbon emissions under Kyoto, arguing they could hurt their economies. Both also refused to ratify Kyoto because it excluded developing nations from binding cuts, saying this made the pact unfair and unworkable.

But de Boer said the United States and Australia had now signalled they were keen to get negotiations started.

He also said the current system's clean development mechanism (CDM) should be improved in the new regime, with projects to come from a broader range of developing countries and with scope to simplify the system's procedures.

A new regime should also include pilot projects to reduce emissions that result from deforestation, which might be responsible for a fifth of the world's total emissions but was excluded from the protocol's first round.

De Boer also stressed saving the planet was not all about personal sacrifice.

"Even though I come from a Calvinist country, I don't believe that the answer to climate change lies in pain and suffering, cold showers and walking to work," the Dutchman said. (Reporting by Annika Breidhardt, editing by David Fogarty)

Story by Annika Breidhardt

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