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PRESS RELEASE

At UN Climate Change Negotiations in Bangkok, UN climate chief calls on governments to purposefully tackle work agreed in 2010; address shortfalls in climate action

(Bangkok, 4 April 2011) – Speaking at the first UN climate change negotiating session of the year in Bangkok, Thailand, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres called on governments to purposefully tackle work agreed in 2010 and address shortfalls in climate action in order to put the world on a climate-safe path.

“Here in Bangkok, governments have the early opportunity to push ahead to complete the concrete work they agreed in Cancun, and to chart a way forward that will ensure renewed success at the next UN Climate Change Conference in Durban,” she said. “If governments move forward in the continued spirit of flexibility and compromise that inspired them in Mexico, then I’m confident they can make significant new progress in 2011,” she added.

Ms. Figueres said that governments have two main tasks before them in 2011. The first relates to the emission reduction targets and actions which would allow the world to stay below the maximum two degree Celsius temperature rise agreed in Cancun. Ms. Figueres pointed out that the sum of national promises so far equals only around 60% of what science requires by 2020 to stay below the agreed two degrees goal.

Ms Figueres said that governments this year need to resolve fundamental issues over the future of the Kyoto Protocol, currently the world’s only existing agreement where almost all industrialised countries agreed internationally-binding commitments to reduce emissions over time. The first period of these commitments under the protocol expires at the end of 2012.

“Governments need to figure out how to address this issue and how to take it forward in a collective and inclusive way,” she said. “Resolving the issue will create a firmer foundation for a greater collective ambition to cut emissions,” she added.

Second, Ms. Figueres called on governments to rapidly advance work to complete the institutions which were agreed last year in Mexico and deliver the funding and technology to help developing countries deal comprehensively and sustainably with climate change.



"It is important that the agreed actions and institutions are delivered on time and in accordance with the deadlines agreed in Cancun so that the broader global climate regime is up and running in 2012," she said.

The institutions include a Green Climate Fund to house the international management, deployment and accountability of long-term funds for developing country support; a Technology Mechanism to promote clean technologies; and an Adaptation Framework to boost international cooperation to help developing countries protect themselves from climate change impacts.

Detailed discussions on how to launch the new Technology Mechanism began Monday in Bangkok. The workshop is looking at practical issues such as what the network should look like, who should be included in it, and how effective participation of relevant institutions can be ensured.

Also in Bangkok, governments began providing clarity of action both for emission reduction targets by industrialised countries and plans to limit emissions by developing countries. A UNFCCC workshop took place Sunday on industrialised country emission reduction targets and the conditions for meeting them. A second workshop got underway Monday on developing country mitigation actions, looking at what these actions mean and what level of support they might need.

"These discussions are important, because they have started to shape up governments' ideas on how to create a transparent, rule-based global emission reduction framework, with delegates looking at the specifics of enhanced accountability and transparency for both developed and developing countries," Ms. Figueres said. "At the same time, whilst the discussions can help the process forward, they have also revealed a shared understanding that the current level of ambition to cut emissions is clearly not enough and definitely needs to be raised," she added.

The UN Climate Change Conference in Bangkok, which ends on Friday, is being attended by around 1500 participants from 173 countries, including government delegates, representatives from business and industry, environmental organisations and research institutions.

About the UNFCCC

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With 194 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. 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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