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PRESS RELEASE

UN's top climate change official reports advances on key issues at June talks, notes issues needing high-level political guidance

(Bonn, 17 June 2011) – Speaking on the final day of the UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany, the UN's climate change chief said that the negotiations had made clear advances on key issues and were also identifying areas that will require high-level political leadership ahead of the annual conference in Durban.

"A central political question that has crystallized during this session is how further emission reduction commitments by developed countries can be taken forward in the broader context of the emerging climate change regime," said United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres.

Referring to the link between negotiations on mitigation under the UN Climate Change Convention and mitigation under the Kyoto Protocol, she said: "Governments are realising that this link needs to be dealt with to get to a global solution and that will require high-level leadership during the year."

Ms. Figueres said that the Kyoto Protocol remained critically important because it contained key rules to quantify and monitor efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and important market-based mechanisms that enable cost-effective mitigation.

Warning against the possibility of a looming regulatory gap between Kyoto Protocol commitment periods, she said: "Governments can double their efforts and come forward with middle ground solutions and options which are acceptable to all sides."

Regarding implementation of Cancun's comprehensive package to support developing country actions on climate change, Ms. Figueres said that the Bonn sessions had paved the way for progress at the UN Climate Change Conference in Durban (COP 17) at the end of this year.

"Strong convergence has emerged on how the Adaptation Committee will be governed, what its composition will be and what its specific role will be," she said. "This progress means that the Committee could be fully operationalized at Durban."

In addition, Ms. Figueres said that progress had been made on the Technology Mechanism that will boost global clean technology cooperation. The Mechanism will include a Climate Technology Centre and Network which will operate with the strong involvement of the global clean technology stakeholder community. At the Bonn session, governments made progress on defining the Centre and Network and asked the secretariat to keep a record of stakeholders that are interested in participating.



The Green Climate Fund, the financial management center of the future climate regime that needs to build towards a global flow of USD 100 billion by 2020, was also discussed in Bonn. The transitional committee has already had two meetings, and a third meeting will take place in Tokyo in July.

For the first time, a special event on effects of implementing mitigation measures took place at the Bonn sessions. Discussions covered economic transition and diversification, along with health and trade-related issues. These discussions will be continued at future sessions.

Looking ahead to COP 17 in Durban, Ms. Figueres said that the incoming South African presidency had been actively consulting and planning for the meeting and that its efforts were well received.

"The incoming South African presidency has consulted with all governments on what they see as a possible outcome for Durban," she said. "This includes the Kyoto Protocol and the global mitigation framework; operationalizing the Adaptation Committee, as well as stronger action on adaptation; the design of the Green Climate Fund, as well as identification of sources for long-term funding; and concrete progress on the Technology Mechanism so that it can be operational in 2012."

Ms. Figueres said that in the run-up to Durban, South Africa plans to engage at a higher political level to prepare for the decisions that need to be made at COP 17.

To date, a ministerial conference is planned for 2 to 3 July in Berlin, and Ministers will also meet approximately a month ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference in South Africa. In addition, South Africa is considering a third ministerial consultation this year.

Additionally, the incoming South African presidency and the current Mexican presidency are planning to engage Heads of State and Government on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York in September.

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. 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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