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PRESS RELEASE

First round of UN climate change negotiations in 2014 set to kick off in Bonn with special focus on renewables and energy efficiency

Governments to continue work on 2015 Paris agreement, identify concrete ways to boost immediate climate action

(Bonn, 5 March 2014) – This year's UN climate change negotiations kick off in Bonn next week, marking the beginning of an intense year of conferences and summits designed to lead to a meaningful, universal agreement in Paris in late 2015. The meeting (10 – 14 March) will include work towards the new global climate agreement, to enter into force from 2020, and work to find ways to boost immediate, effective climate action.

“We are at the highest level of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere for the last 800,000 years and we have not yet started to bend that curve back down again - this is the urgency of the challenge,” said the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Christiana Figueres.

“Just as climate change impacts are accelerating, 2014 needs to be a year of accelerated action and ambition to check the advance of climate change. Governments and business, cities and citizens are closer than ever to achieving the positive tipping points in economies and societies that get us to a low-carbon, high resilience future. We now need to fully harness those opportunities and that momentum.”

The challenge

Despite increasingly inspiring actions by countries, cities, companies and citizens, assessments indicate that annual emissions could rise to more than 55 gigatonnes of CO₂ equivalent by 2020, well in excess of the 44 gigatonnes level, which is broadly accepted as benchmark to put the planet on a pathway to limiting warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius.

There is already a wealth of evidence that reaching that benchmark level by 2020 is achievable with existing technologies and cost-effective policies that create jobs (see examples below).



Stepping up climate action before 2020

A central focus of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) meeting in Bonn will be to identify ways to ramp up national and international cooperative efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions for the period before 2020, after which the new agreement is to enter into force.

Special attention will be given to translating the potential of renewable energy, such as solar and wind, and energy efficiency into concrete, action-oriented outcomes.

“While renewable energy and energy efficiency are proven technologies, there are barriers to overcome in order to power-up a transformational de-carbonization of the world’s economy. I look forward to seeing governments, specialized organizations and other stakeholders build coalitions to realize this huge potential by overcoming barriers,” Ms. Figueres said.

The 2015 Paris Agreement - getting down to work

A central task of the meeting will be to further elaborate elements for a draft universal 2015 climate agreement. The key functions of the new agreement will be curbing greenhouse gas emissions; adapting to the inevitable impacts of climate change; mobilizing the needed finance, technology, capacity-building support to developing countries; and transparency of action and support in the period after 2020.

“Governments have agreed to begin putting forward formal contributions as of March 2015. In just over 9 months, the first draft of a 2015 global climate agreement will be on the table for discussion at the next annual UN Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru. Most of the negotiated content of the Paris agreement needs to be ready by COP 20 in Lima, and we need to reach a common understanding of how individual components of this new agreement will operate for that to happen,” said Christiana Figueres.

At the March meeting, governments will begin to identify the information that they will provide when putting forward their nationally determined contributions.

In some cases, determining these contributions is well underway. In other cases the process has not yet begun. In Bonn, frontrunner governments will present how they are preparing their contributions. Developed countries, along with multilateral organizations in a position to do so, have been asked to support developing countries’ efforts to determine their contributions.

Ms. Figueres said it was increasingly clear that a global solution to the complex set of risks posed by climate change requires action from all groups: governments at every level, private sector and investors, and civil society.

Leaders to provide guidance

A key meeting this year designed to build momentum for the Paris agreement will be a summit convened by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The summit will be a key opportunity for governments, but also businesses, cities and regions to come forward with announcements.



“2014 is the year when intention must translate into action. The world is rich with inspiring and practical solutions to the dilemma of decoupling growth and economic activity from unsustainable levels of pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that harm human health, perpetuate poverty and put our collective future at risk. Excellent examples of action show it is within our reach to create a safer future,” UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres said.

“At the ADP meeting in Bonn, nations can learn from each other how best to fast track, scale up and accelerate a transition to a low carbon economy that will help make Paris 2015 the success it needs to be for seven billion people, rising to more than nine billion by 2050,” said Ms. Figueres.

Note to Editors - Key Examples from UNFCCC report

The full set of options that governments negotiating under the ADP umbrella have identified to increase immediate climate ambition are summarized in the UNFCCC document “Updated compilation of information on mitigation benefits of actions, initiatives and options to enhance mitigation ambition”. It can be found at <<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/tp/08a01.pdf>>

Additionally, select inspiring examples, such as ISO’s energy management standards, will be showcased on <http://www.unfccc.int> before and during the ADP meeting

Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency covers a broad range of issues across practically all sectors of the economy. Overall costs of energy efficiency are generally low compared to other options. Many measures have low or negative net costs and often a short payback time.

- The International Energy Agency’s (IEA) World Energy Outlook 2012 assessed that globally, around 2 Gigatonnes (Gt) CO₂ eq (equivalent) of emissions could be reduced by 2020 through energy efficiency improvements.
- According the UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2012, the total mitigation potential in 2020 for buildings alone is within range of 1.4-2.9 Gt CO₂ eq.
- The IEA says that by unlocking cost-effective energy efficiency options with around USD 11 trillion invested, cumulative global economic output would increase by USD 18 trillion by 2035 with the greatest GDP gains in India, China and Europe.
- The introduction of innovative policies that put a price on carbon, such as emissions trading and carbon taxes are a major driver of energy efficiency. China has implemented several pilot projects and approaches to explore carbon market opportunities, with a view to implementing national carbon trading.
- In Ghana, the implementation of minimum energy performance standards for air conditioners is expected to reduce emissions by around 2.8 CO₂ Mt eq over 30 years and save consumers around USD 64 million annually in energy bills.
- European Union policy to improve efficiency of new cars (95 g/km – 40% improvement compared to 2007) and vans (147 g/km – 28% improvement compared to 2007) by 2020 can result in saving users of such vehicles on average EUR 3-4 thousand in fuel costs over the life-time of each vehicle.



- Measures in Mexico to reduce air pollution through improved brick kiln designs have already boosted fuel efficiency by 50% and reduced particulate pollution from kilns by 80%.

Renewable energy

According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, ramped up policy support could lead to a doubling the renewable energy share of the global energy mix by 2030. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that to 80% of the world's energy supply could be met with renewable energy by 2050.

- The 2012 UNEP Emissions Gap report suggests a potential of 1.5-2.5 Gt CO₂ eq from renewable energy only considering its possible use for electricity production of 4,000 TWh in 2020.
- Over 100 countries, including all the major economies, have set renewable energy targets, while over 120 countries have put in place policies promoting renewable energy.
- Investments in renewable energy are increasingly cost competitive with conventional energy, leading to record installation and investments of USD 260 billion in 2012 and 254 billion in 2013, half of it in developing countries.
- A prime example of national policy to stimulate an increase in renewable energy is Germany's introduction of an Electricity Feed-in Act in 1991. This led to a growth in electricity generation from renewables such as wind, solar and biomass from 3.1% in 1991 to 16.9% in 2009 to around 25% today.
- A similar example can be found in Japan, where a feed-in tariff was introduced in July 2012, resulting in a surge in renewable energy investment from USD 13 billion to USD 16 billion that year in the solar market alone.
- The US Climate Action Plan directs the Department of Interior to permit enough renewable energy development on public lands by 2020 to power more than six million homes.
- The International Labor Organization estimates that worldwide employment in the wind energy sector could grow from 0.7 million jobs in 2013 to 1.9 million in 2020.
- The EU estimates that three million new jobs could be created by 2020 through its renewable energy policies.

International cooperative action

Cooperative initiatives can help governments increase ambition and deliver greater emission reductions, as they engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders, such as central and local governments, the private sector, industry and civil society.

- The UN-Secretary General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative provides a platform for leaders from governments, businesses, finance and civil society and aims for doubling the rate of energy efficiency gains in 2030, along with ensuring universal access to modern energy services by that date.
- The IEA supports the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency, a high-level forum of developed and emerging economies providing global leadership on the issue by exchanging information on best practices.
- The IEA suggests that implementing a partial phase-out of fossil-fuel consumption subsidies could keep emissions within reach of a 2 degrees Celsius pathway to 2020 with no net



economic cost. The G20 group of the world's largest economies has repeatedly committed to such a phase-out and established a working group on the issue.

- The Clean Energy Ministerial, mandated by the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate, convenes economies representing 80% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Part of its work is to drive forward work on carbon capture and storage, or CCS.
- The IEA sees CCS as a key technology for long-term decarbonization of the energy sector, with potential to contribute one sixth of CO₂ emission reductions in 2050 from the energy sector.
- The aviation industry trade association – the International Air Transport Association – has made voluntary commitments to CO₂ emission reduction efforts. It aims to improve fuel efficiency by 1.5% per year by 2020, and achieve “carbon-neutral growth” from 2020.
- The Single European Sky Air Traffic Management Research program aims to achieve a 10% reduction in emissions per flight by 2020.
- The International Maritime Organization has mandated ships to carry energy efficiency management plans from 2020, and has introduced an energy efficiency design index for major classes of new ship build from 2013.
- The 2013 Pacific Energy Summit, including the European Union, the EU Investment Bank and the African Development Bank, agreed at the highest political level to reinforce dialogue on sustainable energy investments in the Pacific Region.
- The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group on Initiatives of Cities spurs climate action on the part of megacities with more than 10 million inhabitants. Such action across the world has doubled since 2011 and is growing very fast, covering local issues such as building codes and sustainable transport.
- A covenant of European Mayors is already bringing together a network of more than 2000 municipalities in Europe to boost integrated energy planning in cities to achieve a 29% emission reduction by 2020.
- According to UNEP, the forestry sector, through REDD+ and other institutions, has the potential to reduce emissions by up to 4.2 Gt CO₂ eq from 2020. Annual investment of USD 30 billion to reduce forest deforestation and degradation could sustain up to 8 million additional full-time jobs in developing countries.

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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. In Doha in 2012, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, which establishes the second commitment period under the Protocol. 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.



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See also: <<http://unfccc.int/press/items/2794.php>>

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