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PRESS RELEASE

Staff at the UN Climate Convention Back Climate Neutral Campaign

Purchasing of Offsets to Generate Funds for Vulnerable Communities

(Bonn, 9 July 2014) – Staff with the UN climate change secretariat are as of today signing up to an innovative campaign aimed at promoting a long-term vision of a climate neutral world while generating useful funding for vulnerable communities.

The campaign involves staff members and their families using UN-certified carbon credits, so called (CERs), to address personal emissions above and beyond their current efforts to reduce emissions at home and at work.

In future, a similar campaign will look beyond the secretariat to include local governments, companies and individuals interested in achieving climate neutrality.

Starting in July, staff members can offset their remaining greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions using CERs produced by emission reduction projects – ranging from clean cookstove projects, to wind energy, to industrial projects – registered under the UNFCCC's clean development mechanism (CDM).

Staff members will purchase credits from the Adaptation Fund, which is funded by a two per cent levy on all issued CERs. In the past three years, the Adaptation Fund has dedicated USD 226 million to aid climate resilience in nearly 40 countries.

Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, said: “There are many ways in which we can all contribute to climate action in order to meet the goal of staying under a two degree C temperature rise. Individuals can and should make wise choices on what they buy, how they get around, what they eat and the kind of energy they use to power their homes. After these efforts, some emissions associated with our daily life still remain. This new campaign offers the opportunity to offset those remaining emissions, moving us towards a low carbon, indeed a climate neutral, life.”

“Offsetting is not a silver bullet, nor an alternative to the deep and decisive emission reductions that economies and communities have to make now and into the future. But offsetting has a part to play and in doing so can generate some of the funding needed for clean energy and adaptation projects in developing countries, to assist them in their ambition for a cleaner, healthier, more prosperous world,” she added.



“Today, staff members at the UNFCCC are contributing to the campaign — but this is just the start. We are currently looking at ways to easily allow others, for example individuals, companies, cities, events, and the wider UN system, to calculate their emissions and carry out a simple transaction to offset them with a broad range of available UN-certified offset credits,” said Ms. Figueres.

Additional Information

Carbon offsetting is one means for individuals and businesses to take action to combat climate change. It requires first calculating one’s carbon footprint, estimating the volume of emissions one generates from activities and consumption, such as driving, flying, energy use, food and water consumption. Once this climate footprint is calculated, one can take steps to reduce emissions and offset the rest, to become climate neutral.

But offsetting with CDM carbon credits is much more than a means to achieve climate neutrality. CDM projects incentivize investment in clean technology in developing countries, helping households and communities improve their wellbeing and health while guiding countries along a low-emitting path to development.

Offsetting with Adaptation Fund CERs has the added benefit of supporting a wide range of climate change adaptation activities; for example, increasing the resilience of small-scale agriculture producers in Argentina or ensuring continued access to water in Mongolia.

CDM projects reduce GHG emissions and contribute to sustainable development in a variety of ways. Projects can:

- Replace the use of fossil fuels with clean renewable energy (wind, hydro, solar, biomass, natural gas);
- Reduce energy consumption and use of fossil fuels through energy efficiency measures (clean cooking stoves, energy efficient light bulbs);
- Capture already released carbon in trees and other plants (reforestation and forest regeneration projects).

For each tonne of GHG – measured in terms of carbon dioxide – verified as avoided or removed by sinks (think planting trees), the project earns one CER.

Useful Links

Adaptation Fund projects funded by CDM CERs: http://adaptation-fund.org/funded_projects/interactive
Adaptation Fund at a glance (infographic): <http://adaptation-fund.org/page/adaptation-fund-glance>
Achievements of the CDM (infographics): http://cdm.unfccc.int/CommonImages/infocus_210314.png

CDM project video library: <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheCDMvideos>

About the CDM

The clean development mechanism (CDM) allows emission-reduction projects in developing countries to earn certified emission reductions (CERs), each equivalent to one tonne of avoided CO₂. CERs can be traded and sold, and used by industrialized countries to meet a part of their emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol.



CERs can also be used by individuals, companies, events and governments seeking to reach carbon neutrality or demonstrate environmental stewardship by offsetting some or all of their emissions. With more than 7,700 registered projects and programmes in 105 developing countries, the CDM has proven to be a powerful tool to incentivize investment in emission-reduction projects and contribute to sustainable development.

About the UNFCCC

With 196 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.

About the Adaptation Fund

The Adaptation Fund was established to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries that are parties to the Kyoto Protocol and are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Over the past three years, the fund has dedicated more than US\$ 226 million to increase climate resilience in 39 countries around the world. Helping the most vulnerable countries and communities is an increasing challenge and imperative for the international community, especially because climate adaptation requires significant resources beyond what is already needed to achieve international development objectives. Financing for the Adaptation Fund comes mainly from sales of CERs. The share of proceeds amounts to two per cent of the value of CERs issued each year for CDM projects.

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