

Developing countries demand compensation for climate change

Accra, Ghana (PANA) - A number of African countries attending the climate talks here have demanded billions in compensation from rich countries for the impacts of global warming.

The demand comes at the close Wednesday of the one-week meeting of the United Nations climate talks which discussed reduction in emissions from deforestation in

developing countries.

The Accra talks constitutes the third major United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiating session this year to get to an agreement on strengthened long-term cooperative action on climate change.

The agreement is to be clinched in December 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

At the meeting here, a number of key African civil society say that any response to climate change must see rich countries taking on their full responsibility for the problem.

According to Christian Aid, a number of countries, including the Philippines on behalf of the G77 group of developing countries and China, have made proposals for financing a global response to climate change.

During the meetings, the European Union was forced to admit that it had nothing significant to put on the table at this point.

"A serious and equitable response to climate change will require rich countries to pay billions in public funds to help poor countries develop in a sustainable,

low carbon manner. So why have the EU, which like to claim global leadership in the response to climate change, turned up with empty pockets again," said Nelson Muffuh, Christian Aid's adviser on the UN climate talks.

If average global warming exceeds two degrees Celsius, Africans will face drought, desertification and disease on an unprecedented scale, and Christian Aid says

in order to avert this catastrophe the industrialized countries must deliver the

necessary funds and technology to help African countries protect themselves against the impacts of climate change.

Greenpeace Wednesday said the Accra talks showed some progress, but still lacked the urgency required to meet the 2009 target.

It noted that although there was some progress on the question of funding for developing countries, there was still a lack of concrete proposals on how clean technology would be transferred and that more detail was needed on how developing countries would be assisted to adapt to climate change.

"Too much time is being wasted arguing about procedural details and restating historical positions and not enough real substance is being put on the table," Bill Hare, director of climate policy at Greenpeace International, charged.

"This is the third round of talks since the two-year process was launched in Bali last year, and by now the deal that will be agreed at the end of 2009 should be taking shape."

Campaigners at the talks believe that the negotiations are focusing excessively on finance and not on the root causes of deforestation, such as consumption of biofuels, meat and timber products.

Friends of the Earth International are strongly opposing the inclusion of forests in carbon trading initiatives as this "offsetting promotes business-as-usual pollution in industrialized countries and diverts attention from real measures to tackle climate change.

Campaigners are demanding that Northern governments take the lead in radically reducing emissions and meet their obligations for financial transfers to the South, based on climate debt, for mitigation and adaptation that are independent from

and additional to emission reduction obligations.

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