



# Climate change deal marks an 'essential beginning,' Ban says



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen on last day

19 December 2009 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today welcomed the climate change deal reached by world leaders at a United Nations summit in Copenhagen, calling it an "essential beginning" that contains progress on all key fronts, but adding that work must now focus on turning the deal into a legally binding treaty.

Delegates representing 194 countries attending the Copenhagen conference agreed overnight to work towards implementing an accord forged by some world leaders after two weeks of marathon negotiations in the Danish capital.

"Finally we sealed the deal. And it is a real deal. Bringing world leaders to the table paid off... We have the foundation for the first truly global agreement that will limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support adaptation for the most vulnerable and launch a new era of green growth," Mr. Ban told journalists at the conference today.

"The Copenhagen Accord may not be everything that everyone hoped for, but this decision of the Conference of Parties is a beginning, an essential beginning."

He said results have been made on all four of the benchmarks for success that he laid out during the special leaders' summit on climate change held in New York in September.

"All countries have agreed to work towards a common long-term goal to limit the global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius; many governments have made important commitments to reduce or limit emissions; countries have achieved significant progress on preserving forests; and countries have agreed to provide comprehensive support to the most vulnerable to cope with climate change."

The Secretary-General said these commitments have been backed up by \$30 billion of pledges for short-term adaptation and mitigation measures for poorer countries, and further commitments to raise \$100 billion by 2020 to achieve those goals.

The deal also provides a mechanism for drawing the many nationally announced climate goals into an international deal. Through an annex, developed countries would choose to list their greenhouse gas reduction targets and financing offers, and developing countries would register mitigation and adaptation projects that could be monitored or reviewed.

But he cautioned that serious work lies ahead in turning the Copenhagen Accord into a legally binding treaty, and said he would work closely with world leaders to make that happen.

The so-called Copenhagen Green Climate Fund, aimed at helping poor countries adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change, must be launched as soon as possible so it can start providing assistance to those in need and kick-start clean energy projects.

Mr. Ban acknowledged that the current mitigation commitments offered by countries fail "to meet the scientific bottom line." The Nobel Peace Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has found that to stave off the worst effects of global warming, industrialized countries must slash emissions by 25 to 40 per cent from 1990 levels by 2020, and global emissions must be halved by 2050.

"We still face serious consequences. So while I am satisfied we have a deal here in Copenhagen, I am aware that it is just the beginning. It will take more than this to definitively tackle climate change, but it is a step in the right direction."

UN Assistant Secretary-General Robert Orr said the Copenhagen conference may have "topped the list" for complexity.

The actual negotiations involved the active participation of 28 heads of State representing key countries or groups of countries. The Accord was recognized by consensus and creates a procedure for individual countries to associate with the agreement.

Mr. Orr said that while some delegates consider that the Accord has many flaws, countries overwhelmingly believed that it would advance the climate change negotiations.

Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), said the deal was "perhaps not the big breakthrough some had hoped for, but neither was it a breakdown, which at times seemed a possibility.

"The litmus test of developed countries' ambitions will, in a sense, come immediately. If the funds promised in the Accord start flowing swiftly and to the levels announced, then a new international climate change policy may have been born."

Mr. Steiner stressed that the final deal represented a compromise of differing national and economic interests among States large and small, rich and poor.

"Trying to take over 190 countries through the same door towards a more cooperative global warming policy has proved challenging but ultimately possible and do-able. Time will

be the true judge as to whether 19 December 2009 was indeed an historic date for accelerating a response to combating dangerous climate change and for more sustainable management of economically important ecosystems, such as forests.”

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