



Ban calls on US to put full weight behind agreeing new climate change treaty



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at press encounter with US Senators John Kerry, Richard Lugar and Joe Lieberman

11 November 2009 – Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has urged the United States to take a leading role in forging a new international pact to combat global warming, warning that the consequences of failure outweigh the cost of tackling climate change.

“No country is more important than the United States in resolving this climate change issue,” Mr. Ban told reporters in Washington D.C. yesterday after meeting with congressional leaders ahead of the United Nations climate change conference in Copenhagen next month.

“All eyes of the world are looking to the United States and to this august body, the US Senate,” he said at the media briefing, flanked by US Senators John Kerry, Richard Lugar and Joe Lieberman.

Highlighting that in less than a month world leaders are slated to gather in Copenhagen, Mr. Ban said they must conclude “a robust, global agreement that can serve as a foundation for a climate treaty.”

In Copenhagen, governments are expected to negotiate a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, the 1997 pact – part of a larger UN climate change treaty – which has strong, legally binding measures committing 37 industrialized States to cutting emissions by an average of 5 per cent against 1990 levels over the period from 2008 to 2012.

“From what I heard today, there is great support in the Senate for action on climate change,” said Mr. Ban. “But for some, there are lingering doubts about whether we can afford to take action during this hard economic crisis.”

Acknowledging that there is a price to pay in battling climate change, Mr. Ban stressed that the costs are insignificant compared with the cost of not taking action.

“Inaction will mean a weakened economic recovery, a loss of global competitiveness, increased global instability and further human suffering,” said Mr. Ban. “A global agreement on the other hand will unleash investments that will do more than any single other action could do to jumpstart and sustain global economic recovery.”

Mr. Ban voiced appreciation for the US Government, particularly President Barack Obama, in showing their initiative, leadership and commitment in addressing a climate change bill, as well as for Mr. Obama signaling a willingness to participate in Copenhagen.

"Copenhagen offers us all an unprecedented opportunity. We must use our time before that historic gathering for maximum effort," he said.

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