

Successful climate deal hangs on emissions cuts and financing – UN official



8 October 2009 – A successful new climate change deal hinges on industrialized nations committing to ambitious greenhouse gas emissions targets and reaching agreement on financing to help poor countries adapt, a senior United Nations official said today.

The latest round of negotiations in Bangkok, Thailand, held ahead of the UN conference in Copenhagen in December when nations are expected to reach a new agreement, have resulted in “real advances” against a backdrop of a “spirit of cooperation” towards adaptation programmes and cooperation on technology, Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**), told reporters.

“But you can only take good faith so far,” he stressed.

The “stark reality,” the official said, is that there has not been similar progress on setting developing nations’ emissions reductions targets and a lack of clarity on financial support that is crucial for developing countries to both adapt to and mitigate global warming.

Poorer nations have been “engaging very constructively over the past two weeks to put real meat on the bones of an agreed outcome in Copenhagen, to enhance and advance the Kyoto Protocol,” the 1997 emissions treaty whose first commitment period ends in 2012, he noted.

However, “we’re not seeing an advance on the key political issues,” Mr. de Boer underscored, making it difficult for negotiations to proceed.

Some 4,000 people – including government delegates from nearly 180 countries and representatives from the private sector and environmental organizations – are in Bangkok for the two-week talks.

After those discussions wrap up tomorrow, there will only be five negotiating days left before the start of the Copenhagen summit. That last pre-Copenhagen round of negotiations will be held in Barcelona, Spain, next month.

The current talks in the Thai capital come shortly after last month’s high-level summit, the largest ever on climate change, which was convened by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at UN Headquarters in New York.

That event drew some 100 heads of State and government who issued a call for a comprehensive pact to be reached in Copenhagen. The leaders also stressed the need to boost action to help the world's most vulnerable and poorest adapt to global warming, as well as the importance of industrialized countries agreeing on ambitious emissions reduction targets.

"Your words have been heard around the world. Let your actions now be seen. There is little time left. The opportunity and responsibility to avoid catastrophic climate change is in your hands," Mr. Ban said at the end of the summit, which he convened in a bid to mobilize political will ahead of the Copenhagen meeting.

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