



With breaking stories and
newswire products from

UN NEWS CENTRE



UN climate change chief urges nations to act on Cancún agreements



20 December 2010 – The United Nations climate change chief today [called](#) on countries to follow up on the recent conference in Cancún with higher global emissions cuts and the rapid launch of new institutions and funds.

The agreements reached at the conference, which concluded in the Mexican city of Cancún on 11 December, include formalizing mitigation pledges and ensuring increased accountability for them, as well as taking concrete action to tackle deforestation, which accounts for nearly one-fifth of global carbon emissions.

Delegates at the 16th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)) also agreed to ensure no gap between the first and second commitment periods of the Kyoto Protocol, an addition to the Convention that contains legally binding measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and whose first commitment period is due to expire in 2012.

“Cancún was a big step, bigger than many imagined might be possible. But the time has come for all of us to exceed our own expectations because nothing less will do,” said UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres.

She stressed that the ‘Cancún Agreements’ needs to be implemented as quickly as possible, and be accompanied by “credible accountability systems that will help in measuring real progress.”

If all these targets and actions are fully implemented, UN estimates show they could deliver only 60 per cent of the emission reductions that science says will be needed to stay below the agreed two degree rise in average temperatures, and two degrees does not guarantee the survival of the most vulnerable peoples.

“All countries, but particularly industrialized nations, need to deepen their emission reduction efforts and to do so quickly,” said Ms. Figueres.

Agreement was also reached in Cancún on a package to help developing nations deal with climate change, including new institutions, funding channels and a technology transfer mechanism to help the developing world build its own sustainable, low-emissions future, adapt more effectively to climate change, and preserve and protect its forests for the good of all nations.

Ms. Figueres stressed that these institutions must be launched quickly, noting that millions of poor and vulnerable people around the world have been waiting years to get the full level of assistance they need.

She added that the UNFCCC will support all governments in this new work, and said she hoped that it will be possible to point to new and concrete examples of success when the parties to the Convention a year from now in South Africa.

“I expect in particular to see rapid decisions on appointing the board of the new Green Fund and the Committee of the Technology Mechanism. I also look forward to receiving the details of fast-start financing from industrialized countries so the secretariat can compile the information that shows clearly the amounts that have been raised and are being disbursed,” she said.

The Green Fund establishes a long-term climate finance institution for the first time under the oversight of the parties to the UNFCCC and with a 24-member board that balances representation between developed and developing nations.

“Cancún has significantly expanded the menu of climate implementation and resources available to countries under the United Nations,” said Ms. Figueres. “The imperative to act is now.”

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon also highlighted the achievements of the Cancún conference in a [message](#) to the closing ceremony for the International Year of Biodiversity, held in the Japanese city of Kanazawa on Saturday.

In particular, he noted the important agreement reached on REDD Plus, backed by the financial resources to implement it. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) is an effort to create a financial value for the carbon stored in forests, offering incentives for developing countries to reduce emissions from forested lands and invest in low-carbon paths to sustainable development.

REDD-Plus goes beyond deforestation – which some estimates show has contributed up to one-fifth of global carbon emissions, more than the world’s entire transportation sector – and includes

the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

“By promoting the conservation and sustainable management of forests we can not only mitigate climate impacts and increase resilience, but go a long way towards slowing the accelerating rate of biodiversity loss,” Mr. Ban said in the message, which was delivered by Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Cancun

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Cancún agreement puts climate change negotiations ‘back on track’ – UN official](#)