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## New UN climate change chief rallies governments to step up action



Christiana Figueres, new Executive Secretary for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

2 August 2010 – With the future of humanity at stake, governments must continue building common ground to further progress on climate change, the new United Nations chief on the issue **said** in the latest round of international negotiations which kicked off in Bonn today.

“Whether we succumb to the storms of climate change or work together to reach the far shore is up to us to decide,” Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**), said, invoking the journey made by Christopher Columbus more than five centuries ago.

This was her first address to UN climate change talks as head of the UNFCCC since taking over from Yvo de Boer last month.

“As individuals, as governments, as a global community, we must all exceed our own expectations, simply because nothing less will do,” Ms. Figueres told delegates.

Science, she said, has shown when and by how much greenhouse gas emissions must drop to avert climate change’s worst impacts.

“Time is not on our side,” Ms. Figueres stated. “Decisions need to be taken, perhaps in an incremental manner, but most certainly with firm steps and unwavering resolve.”

The week-long talks under way in Bonn are the third round of UN climate change negotiations so far this year, ahead of the next conference of parties to the UNFCCC in Cancun in November.

At that gathering in the Mexican city, Ms. Figueres told delegates today, "you have both the responsibility and the opportunity to take the next essential step: to turn the politically possible into the politically irreversible."

Speaking to reporters, she said that governments can build on progress made so far in five main areas.

Firstly, the public pledges made by all industrialized countries to slash emissions by 2020 and the plans put forward by more than one third of developing nations to limit their emissions growth must be captured in an internationally-agreed form, she said.

Secondly, governments must forge ahead with efforts to agree on ways to allow developing countries to take action in areas including adapting to climate change, limiting emissions growth, providing adequate finance and enhancing the use of clean energy.

In another key area, "industrialized nations can turn their pledges of funding into reality," she said.

Last year, these countries promised to provide \$30 billion in fast-track financing for developing countries to adapt and mitigate climate change through 2012, with pledges having been made to raise \$100 billion annually by 2020.

"Developing nations see the allocation of this money as a critical signal that industrialized nations are committed to progress in the broader negotiations," Ms. Figueres said.

Further, "countries want to see that what they agree with each other is measured, reported and verified in a transparent and accountable way," she pointed out. "Countries want to be confident that what they see is what they get."

Finally, the UNFCCC chief said, while governments agree that pledges must be captured in a binding manner, "they need to decide how to do it."

Governments, she added, "need to deliver this combination of accountability and binding action so that civil society and business can be confident that clean, green strategies will be rewarded globally, as well as locally."

More than 3,000 people – including government delegates and representatives of the private sector, environmental groups and research institutions – are attending the Bonn gathering this week.

The next round of talks is slated to take place in Tianjin, China, in early October, weeks before the start of the Cancun conference.

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