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## **Ban urges leaders to make real progress at UN climate change talks**



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (centre) with Jacob Zuma (right), President of South Africa, and Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in Durban, South Africa

6 December 2011 –

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon urged countries not to lose momentum and show determined leadership to advance negotiations at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa, as States enter their first day of high-level talks.

“The world is looking to you for leadership,” Mr. Ban [told participants](#) at the 17th session of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)), where thousands of representatives from governments, international organization and civil society have gathered to advance ways to cut global carbon emissions.

“The world and its people cannot accept ‘no’ for an answer in Durban,” he said.

“Let us find the will to lead, despite the many difficulties. Let us prove that we not only know where we are going – and how to get there – but that we are prepared to take collective action that will move us down that road.

Mr. Ban stressed the urgency of the moment, reminding countries that “time is not on our side,” and that they must act before reaching a point of no return.

“The science is clear,” he said, citing reports by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which state that carbon emissions are at their highest levels in history, and that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions must be reduced by half by 2050 to avert irreversible consequences.

Mr. Ban acknowledged the current strain in the global economic situation, but underscored that while countries need to be realistic about their expectations, they must also be ambitious, as the health of the global economy, the livelihoods of millions of people, and the survival of some nations are all affected by the impact of climate change.

“We must be realistic about expectations for a breakthrough in Durban,” he said. “We know the reasons: grave economic troubles in many countries, abiding political differences, conflicting priorities and strategies for responding to climate change. Yet let me emphasize: none of these uncertainties should prevent us from making real progress here in Durban.”

Mr. Ban laid out four points that he expected countries to accomplish by the end of the conference.

First, he said parties should work to implement what was agreed at last year’s conference in Cancún, when UNFCCC members agreed to create a Green Climate Fund that would help developing nations protect themselves from climate impacts and build their own sustainable futures.

However, the fund has yet to be launched, and Mr. Ban appealed to industrialized nations to inject capital to allow the fund to begin its work. “Assisting the most vulnerable is both an obligation and a smart investment in a sustainable future,” he said.

Mr. Ban then called on countries to firm up their short and long-term financing commitments, stressing the need for greater transparency in how the current \$30 billion that has been pledged is allocated and delivered where it is most needed.

In the long-term, he called for the mobilization of \$100 billion every year by 2020 from governments, the private sector and other sources.

The third advancement involves the future of the stalled Kyoto Protocol, with Mr. Ban asking countries to “carefully consider a second commitment period.”

“While Kyoto alone will not solve today’s climate problem, it is a foundation to build on, with important institutions. It provides the framework that markets sorely need. Carbon pricing, carbon-trading depend on a rules-based system,” Mr. Ban said.

Finally, Mr. Ban asked countries to build on a vision of a more robust climate change agreement that is effective for all parties.

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Mr. Ban also held a press briefing today, where he [told reporters](#) he would meet with business leaders later in the week to reinforce their support to providing sustainable energy for all.

He also stated that he would devote his attention to the UN Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD Plus), as reducing deforestation is key to addressing both climate challenges and development needs.

The economic and social impacts of climate change are already being felt in many parts of the world. A UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) report [released today](#) focuses on how it is affecting women in developing countries by putting their livelihoods and health at risk. In addition, the report states that it also increases their vulnerability to human trafficking.

According to UNEP, women play a stronger role in managing ecosystems and ensuring food security through agriculture, making them more susceptible to the adverse effects of climate change.

The report also highlights how climate disasters are disrupting social safety nets among women, leaving them isolated and vulnerable to human trafficking. For example, data from Nepal suggests that human trafficking increases by around 20 to 30 per cent during disasters.

The report puts forward recommendations to tackle these issues, including greater investments in green technologies to increase the productivity of female farm workers and other strategies that would empower them and also benefit the environment.

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