



With breaking stories and  
newswire products from

**UN NEWS CENTRE**



## **Warning of climate change's threat to global security, Ban urges concerted action**



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon speaks to journalists after a Security Council meeting on climate change

20 July 2011 –

Climate change is a real threat to international peace and security, [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon said today, urging developed countries to lead the global effort to find ways to mitigate and adapt to its detrimental effects, with emerging economies shouldering their fair share of the responsibility.

“Extreme weather events continue to grow more frequent and intense in rich and poor countries alike, not only devastating lives, but also infrastructure, institutions, and budgets – an unholy brew which can create dangerous security vacuums,” said Mr. Ban, [addressing](#) the Security Council’s debate on the impact of climate change on international peace and security.

Mr. Ban noted that the international community had made some progress through agreements reached in Copenhagen and Cancún in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)), adding that those pacts formed the foundation for action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enabling all countries to adapt.

“Now we need accelerated operationalization of all the agreements made at Cancún, including on protecting forests, adaptation and technology. Climate finance, the sine qua non for progress, must move from a conceptual discussion to concrete delivery of ‘fast-start’ financing and agreement on sources of long-term financing,” said the Secretary General.

He said the next Conference of Parties to UNFCCC in Durban, South Africa, in December must make a decisive move towards achieving those goals.

“Durban must provide a clear step forward on mitigation commitments and actions by all parties, according to their responsibilities and capabilities. Developed countries must lead, while at the same time emerging economies must shoulder their fair share.

“We cannot ignore history. But we must clearly recognise that there can be no spectators when it comes to securing the future of our planet,” said Mr. Ban.

He also called for a political formula to ensure continuing adherence to the existing commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, adding that negotiations for future commitments and actions must not be delayed by “gamesmanship.”

The Kyoto Protocol is an addition to the UNFCCC that contains legally binding measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and whose first commitment period is due to expire next year. Negotiations on the second commitment phase of the Protocol continue.

Achim Steiner, the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) told the Council that humanity was at a point in its history where it has the capacity to fundamentally alter, within one or two generations, the conditions on which societies have evolved over millennia.

“It is the speed of environmental change, including climate change, that will be increasingly at the heart of our collective concern and response,” [said](#) Mr. Steiner. “There can be little doubt today that climate change has potentially far-reaching implications for global stability and security in economic, social and environmental terms which will increasingly transcend the capacity of individual nation States to manage,” he added.

He said the international community’s ability to manage the consequences of climate change will depend on a “proactive strategy of evolved and perhaps new international platforms, mechanisms and institutional responses” which anticipate security concerns and facilitate cooperation.

In a presidential statement, the Council expressed concern that possible adverse effects of climate change may, in the long run, aggravate certain existing threats to international peace and security.

“The Security Council expresses concern that possible security implications of loss of territory of some States caused by sea-level-rise may arise, in particular in small low-lying island States,” said the statement read by Ambassador Peter Wittig of Germany, which holds the rotating presidency of the Security Council this month.

The Council reaffirmed that UNFCCC is the key instrument for addressing climate change, recalling that provisions of the Convention acknowledge the global nature of climate change and calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate response.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Head of UN-backed climate change panel stresses benefits of limiting harmful gases](#)