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At Bonn talks, UN climate change chief urges progress towards low-emissions future



Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Christiana Figueres

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Against the backdrop of new warnings about the rise in greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere, the top United Nations climate change official today called on governments to make progress in the fight against global warming, building on commitments made last year.

Christiana Figueres reminded delegates at the UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany, of the commitments made at last year's climate talks in Cancún, Mexico, which concluded with a package of decisions to help countries advance towards a low-emissions future.

Dubbed the "Cancún Agreements," the decisions included formalizing climate change mitigation pledges and ensuring increased accountability for them, as well as taking concrete action to protect the world's forests.

"Governments lit a beacon in Cancún towards a low-emission world which is resilient to climate change. They committed themselves to a maximum global average temperature rise of 2 degrees Celsius, with further consideration of a 1.5-degree maximum," [said](#) Ms. Figueres, the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)).

"Now, more than ever, it is critical that all efforts are mobilized towards living up to this commitment," she told the opening session of the two-week conference.

Last week, the Paris-based International Energy Agency estimated that 2010 emissions from global energy generation returned to record highs, representing an unexpectedly sharp rebound from the effects of the financial crisis.

In addition, the United States Government's Hawaii-based Mauna Loa laboratory – a key scientific monitor for global climate change – reported last week that carbon dioxide concentrations peaked yet again in May.

Negotiators at the Bonn meeting are working hard “to provide clarity on the architecture of the future international climate regime to reduce global emissions fast enough to avoid the worst climate change,” according to a news release issued by the UNFCCC.

They are also working on the design of the finance, technology and adaptation institutions agreed in Cancún that will allow developing countries to build their own sustainable futures.

Ms. Figueres highlighted the global climate action which governments need to capitalize on, including new policies that promote low-carbon growth and an increase in low-carbon investment by the private sector, as well as greater use of clean technology.

“The clean and renewable energy revolution has already begun – the challenge is to complete it in time,” she stated.

More than 3,000 participants from 183 countries are attending the Bonn talks in preparation for the UN climate conference to be held in Durban, South Africa, starting on 28 November.

Cancun

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