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UN climate change chief calls for political leadership on key issues



UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres

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The top United Nations climate change official said today that progress has been made on key issues during the just concluded negotiations in Germany, while areas that will need decisions by the world's political leaders before a worldwide conference later this year have been identified.

Progress had been made on the development of an Adaptation Fund, a Green Fund and Technology Mechanism aimed at boosting global clean technology cooperation, through, among other initiatives, the creation of a Climate Technology Centre and network for technical cooperation, Christiana Figueres, the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)), said at the end of the 12-day talks in Bonn.

She singled out the need for a link between negotiations on mitigation under the Convention and mitigation under the Kyoto Protocol – an addition to the Convention that contains legally binding measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions – as an issue needing special attention by world leaders ahead of the UN climate change conference scheduled to be held in Durban, South Africa, at the end of the year.

“Governments are realizing that this link needs to be dealt with to get to a global solution and that will require high-level leadership during the year,” Ms. Figueres said.

She said that the Kyoto Protocol remained “critically important because it contained key rules to quantify and monitor efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and important market-based mechanisms that enable cost-effective mitigation.”

These include, among other mechanisms, a system whereby countries can gain credits by assisting other countries in clean industry and agriculture.

Warning against the possibility of a looming regulatory gap between Kyoto Protocol commitment periods, Ms Figueres said: “Governments can double their efforts and come forward with middle ground solutions and options which are acceptable to all sides.”

Ms. Figueres said South Africa, the incoming president of the UNFCCC, had already scheduled a ministerial level meeting in Berlin in July and the ministers would also meet again approximately one month before the Durban conference. In addition, the South African presidency and the current Mexican presidency are planning to engage heads of State and government on the margins of the UN General Assembly in New York in September.

With 195 Parties, the UNFCCC is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which has been ratified by 192 of the parties to the Convention. Under the Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialized countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments.

The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

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