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UN chief urges leaders to 'seal deal' on climate change

The United Nations chief has urged world leaders to "seal a deal" on climate change when they meet in Copenhagen next month.



Ban Ki-moon:

"The momentum for success is growing"

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he believed an agreement was in sight, with recent moves by some countries a positive step to cutting emissions.

Danish PM Lars Lokke Rasmussen said he hoped to see "money on the table" at the UN conference he will host.

Both spoke at a Commonwealth meeting also focusing on climate change.

The Copenhagen summit, from 7-18 December, will see more than 85 national leaders gather to discuss climate change.

"Our common goal is to achieve a firm foundation for a legally binding climate treaty as early as possible in 2010," Mr Ban told the Commonwealth leaders at their summit in Trinidad and Tobago where he was a guest.

"An agreement is within reach.

"We must seal a deal in Copenhagen," he said.

Mr Rasmussen urged developed countries to "put figures on the table" to help poor nations combat climate change.

"The need for money on the table - that is what we want to achieve in Copenhagen," he said.

Their comments came after British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, also a guest at the Commonwealth meeting, proposed a multi-billion-dollar fund to help developing nations deal with climate change.

Mr Brown said the \$10bn (£6bn) fund should also be used to help developing nations cut greenhouse gas emissions.

"We face a climate emergency: we cannot wait until 2013 to begin taking action," Mr Brown said.

Many Commonwealth members are island states threatened by rising sea levels.

Mr Rasmussen was optimistic about a deal being struck at Copenhagen, saying the summit was "capable of delivering the turning point we all want".

The climate treaty, now expected to be adopted as a final text only next year, will replace the Kyoto Protocol that expires in 2012.

Mr Brown said half of the \$10bn fund should go towards helping developing nations reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and the other half towards helping them adapt to climate change.

The first cash would be made available next year, he said, before any emissions deal could take effect.

He is offering \$800m from the UK over three years, money that has already been budgeted for.

"What I feel the developing countries need to know is

ANALYSIS

James Robbins, BBC diplomatic correspondent

It's a highly unorthodox summit, which may be just what the Commonwealth needed to counter charges it is an irrelevant relic of Britain's imperial past.

This time, key leaders from outside the Commonwealth were invited to the first day - given over entirely to the dominant world issue: climate change.

The UN secretary-general, the French president, and Denmark's prime minister seized the chance of the last major political gathering before December's crucial global negotiations to urge the heads of more than 50 nations here to lead by example and ease deadlocks between the developed and developing world.

If the Commonwealth is a microcosm of the wider world, spanning giant India, rich Britain, Australia and Canada, as well as some of the smallest and most vulnerable island states like the Maldives, then where better to argue that all leaders should prepare to make bold concessions to achieve a better outcome in Copenhagen?

Judging whether or not this Summit really makes a difference may be impossible, but it has certainly raised the Commonwealth's profile, and reminded the world beyond the

THE COMMONWEALTH

Made up of former British colonies, dependencies and other territories, plus Mozambique

Founded in 1931

Currently 53 members, with combined population of 1.8 billion

that we are absolutely serious that we would start now," he said, quoted by Reuters news agency.

In separate remarks quoted by AFP news agency, Mr Sarkozy proposed a funding programme of \$10bn a year in the years 2010-12, and an "ambitious mechanism" for payments beyond those years.

He did not indicate how much France was prepared to contribute.

The Commonwealth's 53 nations comprise nearly two billion people, a third of the planet's population.