

Youth to mobilize against climate change in 100 cities – UN



23 August 2009 – Youth-organized rallies will be held in 100 cities across the globe to push governments to 'seal the deal' on an ambitious agreement to curb greenhouse gas emissions later this year, the United Nations Environment Programme (**UNEP**) announced today.

The largest-ever youth climate change conference, organized by UNEP and drawing some 800 young people, wrapped up in Daejeon, in the Republic of Korea, today, with participants pledging plow ahead with efforts to ensure that global warming remains an international priority, with just over three months remaining until negotiations on a possible new pact end in Copenhagen, Denmark.

"The young people of the world are the generation that will inherit the transformational decisions governments need to take in less than 110 days time," **said** Achim Steiner, UNEP's Executive Director.

"If their passion, commitment and ideas can be embraced by world leaders and governments over the coming days and weeks, then a climate agreement that can puts the world on track to a low carbon, resource efficient Green Economy can be secured."

During the week-long Tunza International Youth Conference on Climate Change, young people agreed on regional action plans calling for, among other measures, reaching out to other environmental groups educating others about the upcoming Copenhagen conference and utilizing social networking sites, such as Twitter and Facebook, to spread the message.

"There are a lot of indigenous cultures that are losing, because nobody wants to hear what we want to say, what we know about mother earth, and it is frustrating for us because we have so many things to share and the world doesn't listen to us," said Yaiguili Alvarado Garcia from the Kuna indigenous group in Panama.

"There are many things we asked the governments to do and we know it is hard, but we want to work with them, we just want to make a better place for the children, for the animals and plants. It is about time we stop thinking just for us and think also for other beings that cannot speak for themselves. It is time to stop being selfish," she added.

The 17-year-old is one of the 13 newly-elected members of the Tunza Youth Advisor Council, which advises UNEP on how to better engage young people in its work.

Earlier this week, the young people at the Daejeon gathering issued a **declaration**, entitled "Listen to Our Voices: The Future Needs Strong Vision and Leadership," in which they expressed their "concern and frustration that their governments are not doing enough to combat climate change," and emphasizing that "we now need more actions and less talking."

It also asks governments to, among other things, agree on a more fair, just and action-oriented post-Kyoto agreement develop and implement carbon action plans to be monitored by an independent body and support youth efforts to bring about change in the world.

"This statement is the fruit of a diversity of views and voices from young people of different ages and cultures," said Mr. Steiner. "We very much hope the spirit set by these young people will be reflected in the negotiations that will take place in December."

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