

Climate Change Discussion at General Assembly

High Level Event on Climate Change

UN Headquarters, New York

September 24, 2007

On September 24, 2007, a high-level meeting on climate change took place. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has declared climate change as a central focus of the UN. Officials from 150 countries and 71 Heads of State and Government were present, eager to build momentum for the Climate Change Negotiations set to take place in Bali.

Several key points were emphasized during the meeting, concluding that is that the wealthier, more industrialized nations that must now take the lead in adapting to the threats of climate change. These nations contribute the most to the problem, and because of this, it is their responsibility to research and discover alternative means of productions and technology as a solution to adapting to the threats of climate change. Such methods can then be encouraged and implemented within these wealthier nations, while at the same time introduced to the less developed regions of the world to aid them in developing, without sacrificing the environment.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown declared that it was time for industrialized nations to take responsibility for their actions and deal with the problem.

Nicholas Sarkozy, President of France, spoke of a “new economy”. The world could obtain clean economic growth, and can do so through the invention of new technology, the protection of forests, and by assisting the more vulnerable of populations. He asked that all developed nations commit to adaptation assistance, and allowing for flexible carbon emission objectives. In this new economy, carbon would have a price, whether it be through taxation or market mechanisms.

Romano Prodi, Prime Minister of Italy, spoke of the collective goals that European Heads of State and Government had set, including 20 percent reduction of greenhouse gases by 2020, and measures taken in energy efficiency as well as tapping into renewable energy sources.

The President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, said that Europe would meet the Kyoto Targets, and was looking beyond 2012 through strengthening its emissions trading scheme, increasing energy efficiency, and making wider use of renewable energy.

John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana said that Africa is a region that has been affected by increasing droughts, unpredictable rainfall patterns, and desertification.

Yang Jiechi, the Foreign Minister of China, encouraged developed countries to meet their carbon emission reduction goals, while assisting the developing countries by launching the Adaptation Fund under the Protocol earlier and expanding the Global Environment Fund.

The United States Secretary of State, Condoleeza Rice, said that the US was committed to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Rice

noted that the world must continue to develop, but in doing so, must bring to the market new energy technologies through a technological revolution. Since 2001, the US has contributed 18 billion dollars towards this end.

Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, Sir Michael Somare, and President of the Federated States of Micronesia, Emanuel Mori, both emphasized the need to reduce deforestation and monitoring land and sea degradation by supplying the necessary funds and technology to developing countries.

Raid Fahmi, Minister of Science and Technology in Iraq, said that Iraq is moving towards clean renewable technologies and environmental protection. He said that industrialized countries had to be leaders in the movement for a technological revolution to combat climate change.

Marina Silva, Minister for the Environment of Brazil, said that Brazil had made clean energy initiatives in the past, based upon hydro-electricity and renewable biomass. Their challenge was addressing deforestation, and protecting their land from expanding farming measures. She said that through multi-literalism, the 21st century could serve as an opportunity to correct past mistakes and address the challenge.

Mayor of New Delhi, India, Arti Mehra said much had changed since the 2002 Conference of States Parties, which had taken place in her city. New Delhi has the world's largest bus fleet run on clean fuel, and similar initiatives were underway. She emphasized the role of local authorities, and encouraged delegate to invest at the local level.