

23 December 2009

Obama says disappointment over Copenhagen is valid



Mr Obama says a complete collapse of the talks would have been worse
US president Barack Obama says people are justified in being disappointed by the outcome of the Copenhagen summit on climate change.
But he said in an interview with with US PBS television's Newshour that at least there had not been too much "backsliding" on previous positions.
He said this was preferable to a complete collapse of the talks.
The summit ended with no binding deal, but with nations "taking note" of a need to limit temperature rises to 2C.

"I think that people are justified in being disappointed about the outcome in Copenhagen," Mr Obama said.

"Rather than see a complete collapse in Copenhagen, in which nothing at all got done and would have been a huge backward step, at least we kind of held ground and there wasn't too much backsliding from where we were."

Accusations

Mr Obama's comments follow China's rejections of claims made by a British minister that it "hijacked" efforts to reach an agreement at the climate summit in Copenhagen.

Beijing's foreign ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said on Tuesday that the accusations were a political plot made by leaders who wanted to shirk their own obligations.

China and other big developing countries have long accused the world's richer economies of failing to offer big enough emissions cuts, and of not offering enough help to other nations struggling to cope with climate change.

On Monday, China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi praised the summit, saying it had been "not a destination, but a new beginning".

The final accord was reached between the US, China, India, Brazil and South Africa, but is not legally binding.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon says the agreement must be made legally binding next year.

22 December 2009

China rejects UK claims it hindered

Copenhagen talks



Delegates did not manage to reach a legally binding agreement

China has dismissed allegations made by a British minister that it was responsible for the near collapse of climate negotiations in Copenhagen.

Climate Change Secretary Ed Miliband had singled out China for vetoing an agreement on limiting emissions.

Beijing said his comments were part of a political scheme to "provoke discord among developing countries".

The Copenhagen summit ended without the 192 countries present reaching a firm agreement on climate change.

The delegates simply committed to "taking note" of a deal recognising the need to limit temperature rises to 2C.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu did not mention Mr Miliband by name, but in comments reported by the Xinhua state news agency, she said statements from "certain British politicians" were "plainly a political scheme".

The aim, she said, was "to shirk responsibilities that should be assumed towards developing countries, and to provoke discord among developing countries".

"This scheme will come to nothing," said Ms Jiang.

'New beginning'

Writing in Britain's Guardian newspaper on Sunday, Mr Miliband said the vast majority of countries wanted a legally-binding treaty to protect the planet but it appeared four or five countries at the summit had been keen to "shelve the accord".



Copenhagen is not a destination but a new beginning

Yang Jiechi

China's Foreign Minister

He said China had vetoed two proposed agreements on emissions cuts, "despite the support of a coalition of developed and the vast majority of developing countries".

Ms Jiang said Mr Miliband and others behind the editorial should "correct their mistakes, fulfil their obligations to developing countries in an earnest way, and stay away from activities that hinder the international community's cooperation in coping with climate change".

The BBC's Michael Bristow in Beijing says China believes it went to the talks in good faith and offering significant proposals, so does not want to be seen to be the cause of the failure to reach a more solid agreement.

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20 December 2009

China and Indonesia welcome Copenhagen summit deal



After two weeks of frantic talks, the 193-nation ended on Saturday
Asian giants China and Indonesia have hailed the Copenhagen UN climate summit outcome, despite its cool reception from aid agencies and campaigners.

Beijing's foreign minister said it was a new beginning, and Indonesia's leader said he was pleased with the result.

Earlier, US President Barack Obama defended the accord he helped broker with China and other main powers.

The non-binding pact, called the Copenhagen Accord, was not adopted by consensus at the summit in Denmark.

Instead, after two weeks of frantic negotiations, the 193-nation conference ended on Saturday with delegates merely taking note of the deal.

BBC environment correspondent Richard Black says the accord looks unlikely to contain temperature rises to within the 2C (3.6F) threshold that UN scientists say is needed to avert serious climate change.



Copenhagen is not a destination but a new beginning

Yang Jiechi

China's Foreign Minister

Climate summit: Where's the beef?

Reaction in quotes

Mardell's America

It includes a recognition to limit temperature rises to less than 2C and promises to deliver \$30bn (£18.5bn) of aid for developing nations over the next three years.

The agreement outlines a goal of providing \$100bn a year by 2020 to help poor countries cope with the impacts of climate change.

It also includes a method for verifying industrialised nations' reduction of emissions. The US had insisted that China dropped its resistance to this measure.

'Make it binding'

China's Foreign Minister, Yang Jiechi, praised the summit in a statement which said:

"Developing and developed countries are very different in their historical emissions responsibilities and current emissions levels, and in their basic national characteristics and development stages.

"Therefore, they should shoulder different responsibilities and obligations in fighting climate change."



The accord was denounced by campaigners and some delegates

"The Copenhagen conference is not a destination but a new beginning," he added.

His upbeat note was echoed by Indonesia, ranked the world's third-largest polluter after the US and China, if the effects of deforestation are taken into account.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said in a statement on his website: "Indonesia is pleased, as [we have] taken a wholehearted stance to save our Earth, to save the children in our country," reports AFP news agency.

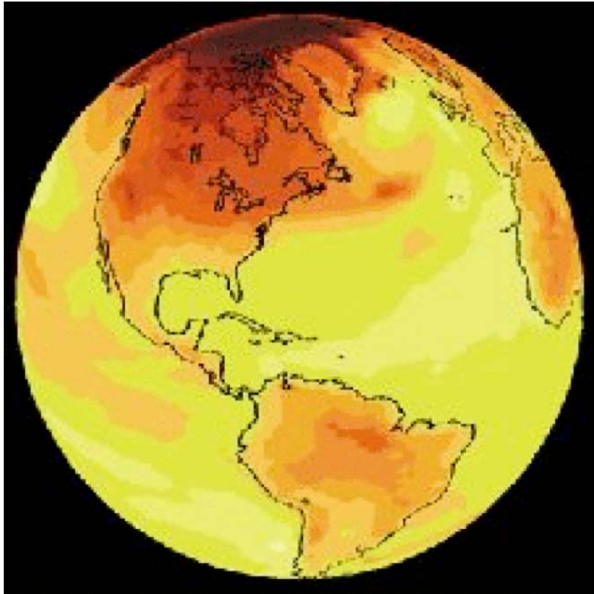
Environmental campaigners and aid agencies have branded the deal a toothless failure.

But the head of the Nobel-winning UN panel of climate scientists said on Sunday the outcome of the summit was a start, though he urged countries to make it binding.

Hopes for Mexico

Rajendra Pachauri, chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), told India's NDTV news channel: "We will have to build on it.

"We will have to make sure it moves quickly towards the status of a legally binding agreement and therefore I think the task for the global community is cut out."



Global warming: A future glimpse

Germany will host the next climate change conference in six months in Bonn, to follow up the work of the Copenhagen summit.

The final outcome is supposed to be sealed at a conference in Mexico City at the end of 2010. US President Barack Obama defended the deal after arriving back in Washington on Saturday, describing it as "the foundation for international action in the years to come".

The Copenhagen Accord is based on a proposal tabled on Friday by a US-led group of five nations - including China, India, Brazil and South Africa.

It was lambasted by some delegations when put to a full session of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change at the summit.

A few developing countries said it was a cosy backroom deal between rich nations that violated UN democracy and would condemn the world to disastrous climate change.

Before the summit, China for the first time offered to limit its greenhouse gas output.

It pledged to reduce its carbon intensity - use of fossil fuels per unit of economic output - by up to 45%, although critics said this would not necessarily lead to any overall cut in its emissions.

19:08 GMT, Saturday, 19 December 2009

UN says Copenhagen deal 'a start'

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has welcomed a US-backed climate deal in Copenhagen as an "essential beginning".

But he said the accord, reached with key nations including China and Brazil, must be made legally binding next year.

After intense wrangling, delegates passed a motion simply taking note of the deal, without formally adopting it.

The pact did not win unanimous support, amid outrage from some developing nations who said it lacked specific targets for reducing carbon emissions.

The accord includes a recognition to limit temperature rises to less than 2C and promises to deliver \$30bn (£18.5bn) of aid for developing nations over the next three years.

It outlines a goal of providing \$100bn a year by 2020 to help poor countries cope with the impacts of climate change.

The agreement also includes a method for verifying industrialised nations' reduction of emissions. The US had insisted that China dropped its resistance to this measure.

But the BBC's environment correspondent Richard Black says the Copenhagen Accord looks unlikely to contain temperature rises to within the 2C (3.6F) threshold that UN scientists say is needed to avert serious climate change.

US President Barack Obama described negotiations as "extremely difficult and complex", but said they had laid "the foundation for international action in the years to come".

"This progress did not come easily, and we know that progress on this particular aspect of climate change negotiations is not enough," he added.

'Toothless failure'

Several South American countries, such as Nicaragua and Venezuela, were among a group saying the agreement had not been reached through proper process.

AT THE SCENE

Richard Black,

BBC News environment correspondent Ministers and scientists and campaigners who dedicated huge swathes of the last year to making a tough deal happen watched aghast as Chinese and US leaders and their entourages flew in, took over the agenda and emerged with what was basically their own private deal, with leaders announcing it live on television before others realised it had happened.

As you'd expect, leaders from EU countries and the developing world that really don't like this deal have been assuming rictus grins and telling us it's a "good first step".

Problem is, Bali in 2007 was the "first step"; come to that, Rio in 1992 was the "first step".

Where we go from here isn't clear at the moment.

Richard Black's Earth Watch blog



After an all-night negotiating marathon, the 193-nation two-week conference ended at 1426 GMT on Saturday.

"The conference decides to take note of the Copenhagen Accord of December 18, 2009," the chairman of the plenary session of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) declared earlier in the day, swiftly banging down his gavel.

Environmental campaigners and aid agencies branded the deal toothless and a failure.

Robert Bailey, of Oxfam International, said: "It is too late to save the summit, but it's not too late to save the planet and its people."

Mr Ban told journalists: "It may not be everything we hoped for, but this decision of the Conference of Parties is an essential beginning."

The Copenhagen Accord is based on a proposal tabled on Friday by a US-led group of five nations - including China, India, Brazil and South Africa.

The UK's Climate Change Secretary Ed Miliband said it was very important that the adoption of the accord would allow the flow of money to begin.

But, he said: "We recognise there could have been more ambition in parts of this agreement.

Therefore we have got to drive forward as hard as we can towards both a legally binding treaty and that ambition."

THE COPENHAGEN ACCORD

Documents in full [163 KB]

Most computers will open this document automatically, but you may need Adobe Reader

Delegates had battled through the night to prevent the talks ending without clinching an agreement.

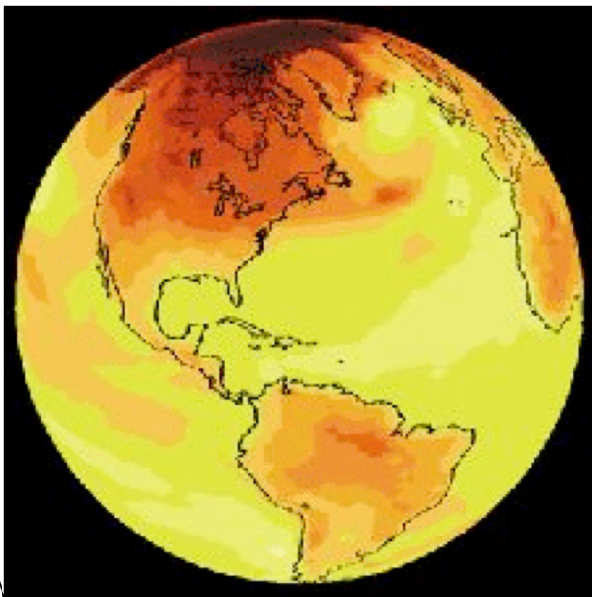
The deal was lambasted by some developing nations when it was put to a full session of the UNFCCC.

The main opposition came from the ALBA bloc of Latin American countries to which Nicaragua and Venezuela belong, along with Cuba, Ecuador and Bolivia.

Venezuelan delegate Claudia Salerno Caldera said the deal was a "coup d'etat against the authority of the United Nations".

Climate 'holocaust'

Lumumba Stanislaus Di-Aping, the Sudanese negotiator, said the accord spelled "incineration" for Africa and compared it to the Nazis sending "6 million people into furnaces" in the Holocaust.



But the African Union backed the deal and his statement was denounced by other delegations. In a further twist, says BBC environment reporter Matt McGrath, there is to be a list of those countries in favour and against on the front of the final document, with some experts suggesting money will only flow to those who say yes.

During the summit, small island nations and vulnerable coastal countries had demanded a binding deal to limit emissions to a level preventing temperatures rises above 1.5C (2.7F) over pre-industrial levels.

09:16 GMT, Saturday, 19 December 2009

Climate talks battle to save deal

Delegates at the climate summit are battling to prevent the talks ending without reaching a final deal.

Earlier, a US-led group of five nations - including China - tabled a last-minute proposal that President Barack Obama called a "meaningful agreement".

However, it was rejected by a few developing nations who felt it failed to deliver the actions needed to halt dangerous climate change.

But the majority of nations are urging the Danish hosts to adopt the deal.

To be accepted as an official UN agreement, the deal needs to be endorsed by all 193 nations at the talks.

THE COPENHAGEN ACCORD

Most computers will open this document automatically, but you may need Adobe Reader
On Friday evening, the US, China, India, Brazil and South Africa reached a last-minute agreement on a number of issues, such as a recognition to limit temperature rises to less than 2C (3.6F).

However, BBC environment correspondent Richard Black says the language in the text shows 2C is not a formal target, just that the group "recognises the scientific view that" the temperature increase should be held below this figure.

'Devoid of morality'

Mr Obama said the deal would be a foundation for global action but admitted there was "much further to go".

However, a number of developing nations were angered by the draft proposals.

Lumumba Stanislaus Di-Aping, the Sudanese negotiator, said the draft text asked "Africa to sign a suicide pact".

AT THE SCENE

Richard Black,

BBC News environment correspondent While President Obama was on TV announcing he'd secured a new global climate deal, most other delegations here had not even seen it.

Initially he had the support of just four other countries - Brazil, China, India and South Africa.

The EU came on board - albeit reluctantly - and so have most developing countries

But the way the deal was done and announced, and its weak provisions, seriously annoyed a number of countries - a "coup d'Etat against the UN".

With no firm target for limiting the global temperature rise, no commitment to a legal treaty and no target year for peaking emissions, countries vulnerable to climate impacts are pointing out this "deal" does not guarantee the temperature targets they need.



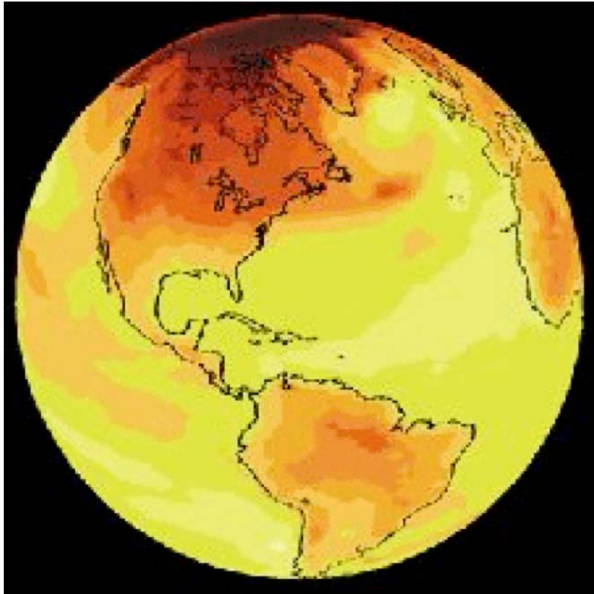
Saying it was "devoid of any sense of responsibility and morality", he added: "The promise of \$100bn will not bribe us to destroy the continent."

The five-nation deal promised to deliver \$30bn (£18.5bn) of aid for developing nations over the next three years, and outlined a goal of providing \$100bn a year by 2020 to help poor countries cope with the impacts of climate change.

The agreement also included a method for verifying industrialised nations' reduction of emissions. The US had insisted that China dropped its resistance to this measure.

During the two-week gathering, small island nations and vulnerable coastal countries have been calling for a binding agreement that would limit emissions to a level that would prevent temperatures rising more than 1.5C (2.7F) above pre-industrial levels.

"Can I suggest that in biblical terms, it looks like we're being offered 30 pieces of silver to sell our future," Tuvalu's lead negotiator Ian Fry said during the main meeting. "Our future is not for sale."



Mr Fry said his country could not accept the deal, as did Venezuelan delegate Claudia Salerno Caldera.

She said: "Mr President, I ask whether - under the eye of the UN secretary general - you are going to endorse this coup d'etat against the authority of the United Nations."

The main opposition to the deal now comes from the ALBA bloc of Latin American countries to which Nicaragua and Venezuela belong, along with Cuba, Ecuador and Bolivia.

The African Union appears to back the deal, along with most of the small island developing states.

"In my mind, this document is amicable," said President Mohammed Nasheed of the Maldives, who took part in the small group discussions from which the "deal" emerged.

"Of course it is not what we were looking for, and I will be the first person to be unsatisfied; but this document allows us to continue negotiations and to have a procedure leading to a binding legal agreement within 2010. I urge all countries to back this, and do not let these talks collapse."

British PM Gordon Brown said the deal had almost universal backing: "Let's remember, a year ago nobody thought this sort of agreement was possible."

Delegates are still angrily debating the deal and there are doubts whether Danish PM Lars Loekke Rasmussen will be able to declare it approved.

But the majority of speakers addressing the conference have been urging the Danish hosts to adopt the proposed text, saying the US-led deal was better than no deal.

EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso told reporters: "I will not hide my disappointment regarding the non-binding nature of the agreement here."

"It is now evident that beating global warming will require a radically different model of politics than the one in Copenhagen"

John Sauven, Greenpeace UK

What do you think of the deal?

"In that respect the document falls far short of our expectations."

However, he added that the EU would accept the US-led deal.

The two-week summit had been deadlocked as world leaders had struggled to hammer out a deal.

"The text we have is not perfect," said French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

But he added: "If we had no deal, that would mean that two countries as important as India and

China would be freed from any type of contract.

"The United States, which is not in Kyoto, would be free of any type of contract. That's why a contract is absolutely vital."

A number of leaders have now left the Danish capital, including the US president and Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Reacting to the Copenhagen "deal", John Sauven, executive director of Greenpeace UK, said:

"The city of Copenhagen is a crime scene tonight, with the guilty men and women fleeing to the airport.

"There are no targets for carbon cuts and no agreement on a legally binding treaty," he observed.

"It is now evident that beating global warming will require a radically different model of politics than the one on display here in Copenhagen."

19 December 2009

Key powers reach compromise at climate summit

President Barack Obama: "We know this progress alone is not enough"

Key states have reached what they call a "meaningful agreement" at the Copenhagen climate summit.

Five nations, including China and the US, reached a deal on a number of issues, such as a recognition to limit temperatures rises to less than 2C.

US President Barack Obama said it would be a foundation for global action but there was "much further to go".

However, the deal could be rejected as a number of nations expressed "dissatisfaction" with the contents.

"Can I suggest that in biblical terms, it looks like we're being offered 30 pieces of silver to sell our future," Tuvalu's lead negotiator Ian Fry said during the main meeting. "Our future is not for sale."

AT THE SCENE



Richard Black,

BBC News environment correspondent

President Obama may have a deal with Brazil, China, India and South Africa - but it is not at all clear that he has a deal with anyone else.

While the White House was announcing the agreement, most other delegations had not even seen it.

This has clearly annoyed a number of countries who, when the agreement document, expressed their distaste in vigorous language - a "coup d'Etat against the UN".

With no firm target for limiting the global temperature rise, no commitment to a legal treaty and no target year for peaking emissions, countries vulnerable to climate impacts are pointing out this "deal" does not guarantee the temperature targets they need.

Richard Black's Earth Watch blog

Mr Fry said his country could not accept the deal, as did Venezuelan delegate Claudia Salerno Caldera.

"Mr President, I ask whether - under the eye of the UN secretary general - you are going to endorse this coup d'etat against the authority of the United Nations."

Nicaragua submitted new documents to the meeting calling for the resumption of negotiations on new legal agreements, including emission reductions from developed nations.

To be accepted as an official UN agreement, the deal needs to be endorsed by all 193 nations at the talks.

The five-nation deal promised to deliver \$30bn (£18.5bn) of aid for developing nations over the next three years, and outlined a goal of providing \$100bn a year by 2020 to help poor countries cope with the impacts of climate change.

President Obama said the US, China, Brazil, India and South Africa had "agreed to set a mitigation target to limit warming to no more than 2C and, importantly, to take action to meet this objective".

He added: "We are confident that we are moving in the direction of a significant accord."

"The meeting has had a positive result, everyone should be happy," said Xie Zhenhua, the head of China's delegation.

CLIMATE CHANGE GLOSSARY

Select a term from the dropdown:

Suggest additions

Glossary in full

"After negotiations both sides have managed to preserve their bottom line. For the Chinese, this was our sovereignty and our national interest."

The agreement also included a method for verifying industrialised nations' reduction of emissions. The US had insisted that China dropped its resistance to this measure.

During the two-week gathering, small island nations and vulnerable coastal countries have been calling for a binding agreement that would limit emissions to a level that would prevent temperatures rising more than 1.5C above pre-industrial levels.

The G77-China delegation forced a number of suspensions in negotiations, accusing the Danish hosts of chairing the conference in a "undemocratic fashion", saying its views were being overlooked.

'Not perfect'

EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso told reporters: "I will not hide my disappointment regarding the non-binding nature of the agreement here."

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Reaction in quotes

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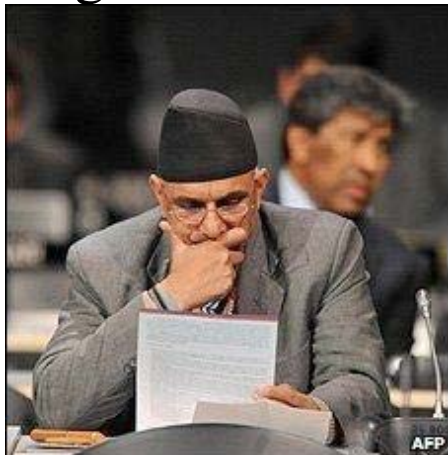
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"There are no targets for carbon cuts and no agreement on a legally binding treaty," he observed.

"It is now evident that beating global warming will require a radically different model of politics than the one on display here in Copenhagen."

18 December 2009

Copenhagen climate summit enters crucial stage



Delegates have been poring over several draft texts on Friday. World leaders are locked in talks as they attempt to deliver a last-minute deal at the Copenhagen climate summit.

Confusion has dominated the final scheduled day as several draft texts were circulated on Friday afternoon.

The US, EU and China have not offered anything new in public, prompting fears that a meaningful deal to curb global emissions was slipping beyond reach.

US President Barack Obama held a second meeting with China's premier in an effort to break the deadlock.

The talks are now expected to continue late into the night.

COPENHAGEN LATEST

- A new draft - a fourth - says developed countries must cut emissions by 80% from 1990 levels by 2020
- It sets a goal of preventing global temperatures rising more than 2C above pre-industrial levels
- US President Barack Obama has rejected a clause that says developing countries need not have their emissions independently verified

- He and Chinese PM Wen Jiabao are holding a new round of bilateral talks

Updated: 18:42 GMT, 18 December

- Richard Black in Copenhagen

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has become the first high-level departure from the summit, in the Danish capital.

A Kremlin spokesman said Mr Medvedev left in order to make a scheduled visit to Kazakhstan.

Delegates are currently considering a fourth draft, which is being called the "Copenhagen Accord".

It calls for global emissions to be cut by 50% from 1990 levels by 2050, with "Annex I Parties" (industrialised nations except the US) committing to cuts of 80% by the same time. Other nations would "implement mitigation actions", in the form of national action plans, that would be updated every two years.

The text also acknowledges the scientific view that nations need to keep emissions below a level that stops the global average temperature exceeding a 2C (3.8F) increase above pre-industrialised levels.

This is the temperature that scientists believe could trigger dangerous climate change.

However, in an apparent concession to developing nations, the document calls for this stance to be reviewed by 2016.

"This review would include consideration of strengthening the long-term goal to limit the increase... to 1.5 degrees (2.7F)," it states.

This is the threshold that a number of nations vulnerable to rising sea levels, such as small island nations, have been calling for during the two-week talks.

On the potential finance package to help developing nations cope with the impact of climate change, the text says: "Developed nations support a goal of mobilising jointly \$100 a year by 2020."

'Time to act'

Earlier, a draft political agreement drawn up by a small group of countries was rejected during overnight discussions.

COPENHAGEN ACCORD

Read the fourth draft [295 Kb]

Most computers will open this document automatically, but you may need Adobe Reader

Download the reader here

The EU did not raise its offer on cutting emissions from 20% to 30%, as some commentators had anticipated.

The bloc decided last year that it would adopt the higher target if there was a comprehensive global agreement on climate change here.

Many observers had expected - and hoped - that the EU would raise its targets for cutting emissions from 20% to 30% by 2020 (from 1990 levels).

BBC environment correspondent Richard Black said this was a clear indication that things were not proceeding towards the kind of deal that the EU had wanted.

Addressing the summit on Friday, President Obama said: "While the science of climate change is not in doubt, I think our ability to take collective action is in doubt right now, and it hangs in the balance."

China's 'special difficulty' on climate

China's Premier Wen Jiabao told delegates: "To meet the climate change challenge, the international community must strengthen confidence, build consensus, make vigorous efforts and enhance co-operation."

He added that in addressing climate change, the international community must not "turn a blind eye to historical responsibilities, per capita emissions and different levels of development". Correspondents say it is the US and China - the world's two largest carbon emitters - that hold the key to striking an agreement. China has been criticised during the summit for not offering stronger carbon emissions targets and for resisting international monitoring of its emissions controls.

The US has received criticism for making its climate aid offer so late in the talks.

COPENHAGEN CLIMATE SUMMIT

Delegates from 193 nations are in Copenhagen to negotiate an agreement on curbing greenhouse gas emissions, in order to prevent dangerous climate change

Developing nations want rich nations to cut emissions by at least 25% by 2020 - rich nations are reluctant to go so far

The US insists China curbs its emissions, and allows international verification

Poor nations want climate aid to come largely from public finances, while the West favours schemes like carbon trading

Q&A: Copenhagen summit

Have your say

On Thursday, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the US was prepared to help establish funding of \$100bn a year for developing countries if a deal emerged that met US requirements. The key US demand is "transparency" from China, seen as a must if the US Senate is to pass legislation controlling emissions.

Finance has emerged as an issue more likely to make or break a deal than emissions pledges. Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva received rousing applause for his speech. He told delegates: "We, the developing countries... when we think in money, we should not think that someone is paying us a favour.

"We should not think that someone is giving something that we are begging for, because the money that would be put on the table is the payment for greenhouse emissions released over two centuries by those countries that industrialised themselves first."

CLIMATE CHANGE GLOSSARY

Select a term from the dropdown:

Glossary
Adaptation
Annex I countries
Annex II countries
Anthropogenic climate change
Aosis
AR4
Atmospheric aerosols
Bali action plan
Bali roadmap
Baseline for cuts
Biofuel
Black carbon
Boxer-Kerry bill
Business as usual
Cap and trade
Carbon capture and storage (CCS)
Carbon dioxide (CO2)
Carbon dioxide (CO2) equivalent
Carbon footprint
Carbon intensity
Carbon leakage
Carbon neutral
Carbon offsetting
Carbon sequestration
Carbon sink
Certified Emission Reduction (CER)
Clean Coal Technology
Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)
Climate change
CFCCO2
Commitment period
COP15
Country in transition
Dangerous climate change
Deforestation
Emission Trading Scheme (ETS)
EU Burden-sharing agreement
Feedback loop
Flexible mechanism
Fossil_fuels
G77
Geological sequestration
Global average temperature
Global energy budget
Global dimming
Global warming
Global Warming Potential (GWP)
Greenhouse gases (GHGs)
Greenhouse effect
Hockey stick
IPCC
Joint implementation
Kyoto Protocol
LDCs
LULUCF
Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate
Methane
Mitigation
Nairobi work program
Natural greenhouse effect
Non-annex I countries
Ocean acidification
ppm (350/450)
Per-capita emissions
Pre-industrial levels of carbon dioxide
REDD
Renewable energy
Stern review
Technology transfer
Tipping point
Twenty-twenty-twenty (20-20-20)
UNFCCC
Waxman-Markey energy bill
Weather

President Lula added: "I would love to leave Copenhagen with the most perfect document in the world... I'm not sure if some angel or wise man will come down to this plenary and put in

our minds the intelligence that we lacked up until now. I don't know if that's going to be possible."

Earlier, Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono called for all states, both developed and developing, to be flexible about verification.

He indicated the possibility of setting up an international mechanism for monitoring emission cuts.

17 December 2009

Sarkozy backs calls to keep Kyoto



President Sarkozy's speech was welcomed by developing nations

French President Nicolas Sarkozy has backed calls by developing nations to keep the Kyoto Protocol, which only requires rich nations to cut emissions.

Speaking in Copenhagen, he broke away from the EU position of favouring a new deal that saw all nations commit to measures to curb climate change.

Elsewhere, the US and China have been at loggerheads over binding targets.

With one day remaining, observers say the climate summit is unlikely to deliver a meaningful deal.

The Danish presidency of the climate summit in Copenhagen has sought to play down expectations of a comprehensive deal emerging from the meeting.

ANALYSIS



Richard Black, BBC News environment correspondent

The shape of a possible political deal has emerged here during a day of private ministerial meetings.

It appears that the Danes have been relieved of political leadership behind the scenes, with Gordon Brown and Kevin Rudd - with input direct from the Washington White House - steering moves to induce all the "important" parties to buy in.

Leaders would have some big decisions to make, however, probably including a target for limiting temperature rise, long-term funding for developing countries, and verification of emission cuts.

Some small developing countries are not entirely happy but the big players appear to be more confident than they were this morning of bringing everyone on board.

Richard Black's Earth Watch blog

The hosts had to drop plans to propose new draft texts on Thursday after opposition from many developing nations, which saw the talks grind to a halt on Wednesday.

Officials said progress could be made, but an international agreement may have to wait until a

2010 meeting in Mexico.

In his address to delegates, Mr Nicolas Sarkozy called on nations to "stop posturing".

"A failure in Copenhagen would be a catastrophe for each and everyone of us," he said. "If we keep on heading where we're going, we are heading for failure."

"So people want to keep Kyoto, OK let's keep Kyoto. But let us agree on an overall political umbrella," he stated.

The French president went on to urge ministers and leaders to adopt a full climate treaty in June 2010.

"Let's give ourselves six months after the Copenhagen conference to transform political commitments into a legal text."

Money on offer

Earlier, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told the meeting her country was prepared to work towards mobilising \$100bn a year for developing countries.

She told delegates: "In the context of a strong accord in which all major economies pledge meaningful mitigation actions and provide full transparency as to those actions, the US is prepared to work with other countries towards a goal of mobilising \$100bn a year to address the needs of developing countries."

She made it clear - as did Japan on Wednesday when announcing a specific figure for assistance - that the money was contingent on reaching a global deal here that met its criteria.

COPENHAGEN CLIMATE SUMMIT

Delegates from 193 nations are in Copenhagen to negotiate an agreement on curbing greenhouse gas emissions, in order to prevent dangerous climate change

Developing nations want rich nations to cut emissions by at least 25% by 2020 - rich nations are reluctant to go so far and want developing countries to curb emissions too

The US will not accept legally binding emissions cuts unless China does the same. China is unlikely to allow international scrutiny of its emission cuts

Ongoing disagreement on how funds to mitigate and adapt to climate change will be provided.

Poor nations want direct aid, while the West favours schemes like carbon trading

BBC environment correspondent Richard Black said developing countries are likely to point out that there is no figure for what the US is prepared to provide itself, either from public or private finance.

The sum is also less than the amount that UN agencies such as the World Bank and International Energy Agency calculates is necessary to help mitigation and adaptation in the developing world.

But transparency has emerged as a major sticking point for the US. It has been calling on some developing countries, including China and India, to open their emissions controls to international scrutiny.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said China had to give ground on the US demand for transparency.

China says it is willing to provide information about its measures to reduce emissions, reports the AP news agency.

Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei is quoted as saying that China is ready for "dialogue and co-operation that is not intrusive, that does not infringe on China's sovereignty".

New alliance?

Addressing the summit on Thursday, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said he feared "a triumph of form over substance" at the outcome of the UN climate summit.

In his speech, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, meanwhile, urged the summit to "summon up the greatest level of ambition".

CLIMATE CHANGE GLOSSARY

Select a term from the dropdown:

Glossary
Adaptation
Annex I countries
Annex II countries
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AR4
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Greenhouse effect
Hockey stick
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Joint implementation
Kyoto Protocol
LDCs
LULUCF
Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate
Methane
Mitigation
Nairobi work program
Natural greenhouse effect
Non-annex I countries
Ocean acidification
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Per-capita emissions
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Tipping point
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UNFCCC
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Suggest additions

Glossary in full

"The success of our endeavours depends on us forging a new alliance," he told delegates. He added: "In these few days in Copenhagen which will be blessed or blamed for generations to come, we cannot permit the politics of narrow self-interest to prevent a policy for human survival."

Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the UN's climate body, told reporters that negotiators would consider two negotiating texts; one looking at further emission cuts by developed nations (except the US) by 2020, and another that looks at committing all nations to curbing climate change.

Mr de Boer added that the texts would be considered by two working groups, which were expected to report back to the main conference on Thursday evening.

Saleemul Huq, senior fellow in climate change at the International Institute for Environment and Development, told BBC News: "The negotiation process is in a high state of confusion."

"On the other hand, heads of state are arriving and talking to each other, and within hours every important decision-maker on the planet will be in the same town at the same time.

"If they can't do it, no-one can - and I think that they will."

India's environment minister Jairam Ramesh said a "blame game" had already begun because of the slow progress towards a deal.

Containing emissions to a level associated with a temperature rise of no more than 2C is the stated aim of the big nations here.

As things are going they will miss that target by a considerable margin, our correspondent says.

The poorest and most vulnerable nations say emissions should be contained to a level associated with a temperature rise of 1 or 1.5C.

Thursday, 17 December 2009

Slow progress at Copenhagen talks



There have been ongoing protests throughout the two-week conference. Talks remain deadlocked at the climate summit in Copenhagen with just two days left to seal a global emissions pact.

Developed and developing nations remain at odds over who should cut emissions, how deep the cuts should be, and how much aid should go to poor countries.

But there has been some progress - wealthy nations pledged new funds to bankroll the war on global warming.

Dozens of world leaders are due to join the talks on Thursday, hoping to sign a new climate pact on Friday.

Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, who arrived in the Danish capital on Wednesday evening, said his attendance showed the importance China attached to a deal.

"I hope that the summit will yield a fair, reasonable, balanced and achievable result through the joint efforts of all parties," Mr Wen said in an official statement.

Speakers lined up to address Thursday's summit include German Chancellor Angela Merkel, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula de Silva and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

US President Barack Obama is due to attend the final day of the meeting on Friday, when some 120 world leaders try to lay out a strategy to deal with climate change after the end of 2012, when obligations run out under the landmark Kyoto Protocol.

'Dangerous point'

But there is widespread scepticism that a deal can be reached.

COPENHAGEN LATEST

- Australia's Kevin Rudd, Indonesia's Susilo Yudhoyono, France's Nicolas Sarkozy and Germany's Angela Merkel among world leaders due to address the conference on Thursday
- Japan offers \$5bn a year to poor nations if a deal is reached
- Australia, France, Japan, Norway, the UK and US collectively commit \$3.5bn over three years to combating deforestation
- Ethiopia, on behalf of African Union, endorses the G8 and EU target for maximum temperature rise of 2C

Updated: 04:59 GMT, 17 December

- [Climate change in graphics](#)
- [Q&A: Copenhagen summit](#)

Developing countries, led by China, accused host Denmark of a lack of transparency by suggesting language for the agreement without full consultation by all sides on the 194-nation summit.

And China told participants that it saw no chance of reaching an operational accord this week, an unnamed official told Reuters news agency.

After a day of long delays and finger-pointing on Wednesday, Britain's Energy and Climate Change Secretary, Ed Milliband, said the prospects for reaching a deal were on a knife-edge.

"People can kill this process, kill the agreement with process argument," Mr Miliband said, warning the talks were at a "very dangerous point".

The president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, also said he was disappointed with the slow pace of negotiations, whilst Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said: "If the climate was a bank, a capitalist bank, [the West] would have saved it by now." But the chief policy advisor the the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Olav Kjørven, told the BBC that all was not lost.

"It is possible to reach a strong and meaningful agreement in Copenhagen still," Mr Kjørven said.

"At least it should be a very, very good strong start that can then lead to stronger additions later on."

Small progress

On a more promising note, Japan promised poorer nations \$15bn (£9bn) over three years if a deal is made.

The amount - payable from 2010-2012 - adds to the £3.5bn (\$5.7bn) per year commitment made by EU leaders at their summit last week.

Another pledge came from a six-member group - Australia, France, Japan, Norway, the UK and US - which will collectively commit \$3.5bn over three years to combat deforestation.

CLIMATE CHANGE GLOSSARY

Glossary in full

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, speaking on behalf of the African Union, also announced dramatically reduced expectations for climate aid from rich nations.

Denmark said it was trying to simplify several complex draft negotiating texts to help the world leaders to agree on a deal.

Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen has taken charge of the Wednesday-Friday segment involving heads of state and government.

Tensions also flared outside the summit, where police used clubs and tear gas to stop some 2,500 activists who tried to march on the tightly-guarded Bella Center.

Police detained some 260 protesters during the clashes, which led to injuries on both sides.

16 December 2009

Climate talks stall amid protests in Copenhagen

By Richard Black

Environment correspondent, BBC News website, Copenhagen

Advertisement

David Shukman describes the scene as riot police confront protesters

Formal negotiations at the UN climate summit have ground to a halt following wrangles about what documents should be used as the basis for talks.

Beneath the dispute lies a long-running accusation from developing countries that the Danish hosts are trying to sideline their concerns.

The summit in Copenhagen is due to end in just two days.

Outside, police clashed with protesters who stormed barricades around the summit venue, the city's Bella Centre.

Activists have been angered by lack of progress on a new climate deal. They also complained about restrictions on access to the talks.

Police detained more than 240 protesters during the clashes, which led to injuries on both sides. As well as the negotiations at the summit, a succession of presidents and prime ministers has been delivering set-piece speeches.

Many illustrated the very different visions that exist of the deal that should emerge from this summit.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi gave some details of a proposal - drawn up with substantial French involvement - aimed at breaking the impasse here.

Delays

The day began - as many have - with a delay of more than an hour, leaving delegates less than 20 minutes to discuss reports back from various working parties.

On the most controversial issue - further emission cuts from developed nations - there was no agreement.

COPENHAGEN LATEST

- Summit venue is sealed off as police and demonstrators clash outside
- African countries soften their demands for climate finance from rich developed nations
- Danish environment minister Connie Hedegaard resigns as president of the summit to be replaced

by Danish PM

- UN chief Ban Ki-moon suggests climate change deal might not include a figure on long-term financial aid for developing countries

Updated: 16:40 GMT, 16 December

- Climate change in graphics
- Q&A: Copenhagen summit

A succession of developing countries demanded proper talks on this and other issues, while the Danish chairs attempted to condense discussions so speeches from world leaders could begin. Danish Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen told delegates that discussions based on new texts prepared by his office would begin at 1300 local time in a different room.

But the G77/China bloc of developing countries said that was unacceptable, demanding instead to negotiate on text generated during the negotiations that have been happening on and off throughout the year.

The Danish texts were shown to a few delegations and then, apparently, withdrawn.

At 1900 local time, delegates were still sitting in the hall with no information about what was happening.

Infuriated African group

In the main hall, meanwhile, leaders speeches continued, with Mr Zenawi - who chairs the African group here - among the first to the platform.

"Every one of us knows that Africa has contributed virtually nothing to global warming but has been hit first and hardest," he said.

"But we are not here as victims of the past but... so that we can build a better and fairer future for all of us."

RICHARD BLACK'S EARTHWATCH

“ The African group reportedly gave the Ethiopian negotiator a real roasting about this at their routine morning meeting, because the proposal gives ground on some of the African bloc's fundamental points

”

Read more from Richard

Mr Zenawi related some elements of his proposal, including that the sum of \$50bn per year by 2015 and \$100bn per year by 2020 should be raised for poorer countries through "creative financing mechanisms" such as taxes on financial transactions and aviation fuel.

He acknowledged that he knew his proposal "would disappoint those Africans who from the point of view of justice have asked for full compensation for the damage done to our development prospects".

It certainly infuriated the African group of negotiators, because it also endorsed positions that most African countries oppose - notably, a target for maximum temperature rise of 2C (the G8 and EU target), whereas most African governments are committed to 1.5C.

It is not clear whether his proposal has support from other African leaders, however, or from further across the community of poor vulnerable countries such as small island states.

Lord Stern, who has had a strong hand in developing the proposal, said it was "strong and reasonable".

"There will be those who say, understandably, that the plan should go further, but we are at a critical stage in the negotiations.

"The rich countries should give their strong support to the Meles plan, which has been put forward by an African leader with the interests of developing countries at its heart."

'Worst impacts'

Other speeches exemplified the fault lines running through the process.

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Suggest additions

Glossary in full

While EU delegates spoke of achieving the 2C target "if everybody is now ready to overcome the procedural obstacles", developing countries made clear that they view the continuing chaos over texts as a matter of principle, not procedure.

And Nauru's president, Marcus Stephen, demanded proper legal negotiations on the lower temperature target.

"The science tells us that we must limit the rise in global temperature to well below 1.5C to preserve the chance of avoiding the worst impacts of climate change.

"To accept anything less would mean the destruction of our marine ecosystems, shortages of food and water, and the relocation of our communities. Please tell me how is this practical?"

Earlier, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown conceded that a deal might not be achievable here.

But, he added: "If you don't get an agreement this week, people will doubt whether you can get an agreement at all."

16 December 2009



Protesters march on Copenhagen summit

Advertisement

Hundreds of protesters gathered at daybreak in Copenhagen

Hundreds of protesters are marching towards the UN climate summit venue in Copenhagen as ministers begin their discussions there.

Activists have been angered by the lack of progress on a new climate deal, and with logistical problems at the summit.

Talks are deadlocked over emission cuts and financial aid for poorer countries.

And as environment ministers and their aides join the talks, the Danish authorities have slashed the number of campaigners allowed into the venue.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has suggested that poor countries may have to give up their hope of getting immediate long-term financial commitments from richer countries.

The amount of aid rich nations will pay poorer ones to combat global warming has been one of the main stumbling blocks at the summit.

In an interview with the UK's Financial Times, Mr Ban said he didn't think the exact amount was vital to the current deal.

"If they are not able to agree this time at Copenhagen, then there needs to be some initial arrangement. This is a time when common sense, compromise and partnership should prevail," he said.

COPENHAGEN LATEST

- UN chief Ban Ki-moon suggests a climate change deal might not include a figure on financial aid for developing countries, UK's Financial Times reports.
- Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi will try to break the deadlock by proposing new ways of raising money, BBC environment analyst Roger Harrabin says.
- Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has warned there is "no guarantee" of a UN climate deal.

Updated: 07:31 GMT, 16 December

- Climate change in graphics
- Q&A: Copenhagen summit

BBC environment correspondent Richard Black, in Copenhagen, says that for the last two mornings, thousands of would-be delegates have queued for hours to gain access to the conference venue - many unsuccessfully.

Marches are being planned during which some protesters are due to attempt an unauthorised entrance.

If they succeed, they will meet up with others who are planning to walk out of the talks and, our correspondent says, it is possible they will be accompanied by delegates from countries that feel their concerns are being marginalised.

Once negotiations do get under way, delegates will find they still have a huge number of fundamental issues to address, our correspondent says.

These include the size of emissions cuts by developed nations, how finance should be raised and disbursed, and most fundamentally, whether a deal here should aim to keep the global temperature rise to 2 Celsius or just 1.5 Celsius.

Two years after governments decided to seek a new global climate deal and just three days before it's due to be completed, there's clearly still an immense amount of negotiating left to do, our correspondent adds.

In another development on Wednesday, African nations are expected to reject a deal forged by Ethiopia, France and the UK aimed at breaking the deadlock at the summit, the BBC has learned.

The deal - said to have been organised during Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi's recent visit to Paris - would have raised funds for financing clean development and climate adaptation through "innovative mechanisms" including taxes on air travel and on bank transactions.

'Important moment'

The high-level phase of the talks began on Tuesday, with environment ministers and negotiators from 193 countries struggling to make progress on core issues.

CLIMATE CHANGE GLOSSARY

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Glossary
 Adaptation
 Annex I countries
 Annex II countries
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 Weather

Suggest additions

Glossary in full

But the White House says President Barack Obama, who will join world leaders in

Copenhagen later in the week, is confident of reaching a deal.

"The president believes that we can get... an operational agreement that makes sense in Copenhagen, over the next few days," spokesman Robert Gibbs told a briefing.

UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who is already in Copenhagen, told reporters on Tuesday that it was a critical moment.

"This is a very important moment for the world," Mr Brown said.

"It is possible that we will not get an agreement and it is also true that there are many issues to be sorted out. But I am determined... to do everything I can to bring the world together."

More than 120 leaders will formally join the talks on Thursday, aiming to seal an accord by Friday.

15 December 2009

Ban Ki-moon tells Copenhagen summit to 'seal a deal'

By Richard Black

BBC News, Copenhagen

Ban Ki-moon: "The time for consensus has arrived"

Three days of action from ministers are needed to "seal a deal" at the climate talks in Copenhagen, according to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Speaking at the opening of the high-level segment, he told delegates they had the chance to change history.

But governments remain deadlocked on many key issues, including the size of emission targets, finance, and verification of emission curbs.

Demonstrations are expected on Wednesday as ministers convene.

Campaign groups are talking of mounting actions inside and outside the conference centre.

There is anger about the glacial progress of some segments of the talks and about logistical problems that have seen most people from NGOs unable to enter the venue.

UK Climate Secretary Ed Miliband acknowledged that talks "could still fail".

'Decisive moment'

Mr Ban told delegates there was still an "enormous amount of work to be done" if a deal was to be achieved.

“ When it comes to the air we breathe and the water we drink, there are no national boundaries ”

Prince of Wales

Prince's climate change warning

"For three years, I have sought to bring world leaders to the table," he said.

"No-one will get everything they want; but if we work together, then everyone will get what they need."

Danish Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen told ministers they must make this conference "a decisive moment of change".

"Climate change is higher on the agenda than ever before," he said.

"And so it should be; the grim projections from science grow more alarming each day and already many face the dire consequences of global warming."

Different visions of what the science implies are, though, the cause of one of the most fundamental fault lines running between delegations here - what figure should be adopted as the target for limiting the global average temperature rise since pre-industrial times.

Prince Charles: "Our planet has reached a point of crisis"

Mr Ban came under fire from developing countries after asserting in a BBC interview that a deal here must "put us on the path of limiting global temperature rise within 2C".

Small island states, and other countries that consider themselves vulnerable to climate impacts, have been demanding a lower target of 1.5C and the issue is still under negotiation.

"It is simply a true fact - if temperatures get to 2C, that spells disaster and almost doom to our countries," said Bruno Sekoli of the Lesotho delegation, which chairs the bloc of Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Bolivia's ambassador, Pablo Solon, added: "This is the Secretary General; he can't take sides on an issue like this."

Britain's Prince Charles, who also addressed the opening of the high-level segment of the conference, said the planet had "reached a crisis" which society had just seven years to solve.

"With issues of such magnitude," he said, "it is easy to focus solely on the challenges, the worst-case scenarios, the 'what-ifs' of failure.

"But take a moment to consider the opportunities if we succeed... a healthier, safer and more sustainable, economically robust world."

Stumbling blocks

Elsewhere in the conference, discussions continued - mainly behind closed doors - on some of the issues that continue to divide governments two years after the process towards a new global climate deal started and just three days before it is due to conclude.

COPENHAGEN LATEST

- Conference president Connie Hedegaard says the keyword for the rest of the summit will be "compromise"
- UNFCCC executive secretary Yvo de Boer warns that negotiations are progressing too slowly
- Organisers are unable to accommodate all of the people who want to enter the venue
- UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon warns "time is running out", as negotiations continue through

Monday night

Updated: 18:12 GMT, 15 December

- Climate change in graphics
- Q&A: Copenhagen summit

Mr Miliband, who co-chaired talks on finance, said there had been acknowledgement of the need for "significantly scaled-up public funding".

Developing countries have demanded that a majority, if not all, of the money they will receive in future for clean development and climate adaptation should come from public funds; but developed nations have been equally keen that a substantial share - perhaps the majority - should come from levies on the prospective global carbon market.

Another of the discussion groups, on emission pledges by developing countries, made little progress.

A senior source told the BBC that the main stumbling block was US insistence that commitments should be legally binding.

China in particular is adamant that such plans must be voluntary and that emission curbs should not be subject to international verification - something that many members of the US Senate are said to regard as key if they are to back any agreement here.

US chief negotiator Todd Stern said he did not expect the US to increase its current offer of cutting emissions by about 3% from 1990 levels by 2020.

"I am not anticipating any change in the mitigation commitment," he told reporters.

The US announced that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is to attend the final two days of the

summit, in addition to President Barack Obama.

Walk-outs

Around the conference centre, campaign groups gave advance notice of actions expected inside and outside the venue on Wednesday.

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Glossary Adaptation Annex I countries Annex II countries Anthropogenic climate change Aosis AR4 Atmospheric aerosols Bali action plan Bali roadmap Baseline for cuts Biofuel Black carbon Boxer-Kerry bill Business as usual Cap and trade Carbon capture and storage (CCS) Carbon dioxide (CO₂) Carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent Carbon footprint Carbon intensity Carbon leakage Carbon neutral Carbon offsetting Carbon sequestration Carbon sink Certified Emission Reduction (CER) Clean Coal Technology Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Climate change CFCCO₂ Commitment period COP15 Country in transition Dangerous climate change Deforestation Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) EU Burden-sharing agreement Feedback loop Flexible mechanism Fossil_fuels Geological sequestration Global average temperature Global energy budget Global dimming Global warming Global Warming Potential (GWP) Greenhouse gases (GHGs) Greenhouse effect Hockey stick IPCC Joint implementation Kyoto Protocol LDCs LULUCF Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate Methane Mitigation Nairobi work program Natural greenhouse effect Non-annex I countries Ocean acidification ppm (350/450) Per-capita emissions Pre-industrial levels of carbon dioxide REDD Renewable energy Stern review Technology transfer Tipping point Twenty-twenty-twenty (20-20-20) UNFCCC Waxman-Markey energy bill Weather

Suggest additions

Glossary in full

Having allowed three times more people to register than the centre can hold, the UN climate convention and the Danish hosts have limited numbers of NGOs to 7,000 on Wednesday, falling to 1,000 on Thursday and just 90 on Friday when heads of state and government are scheduled to attend.

Activists are planning a series of morning marches outside the centre, with some groups attempting unauthorised entry.

A walkout - possibly involving government delegates - is anticipated, and there are also plans for a "sleep-in" on Wednesday night.

Organisers say the actions are intended to be non-violent.

Richard.Black-INTERNET@bbc.co.uk

15 December 2009

UN climate talks 'back on track'

By Richard Black

Environment correspondent, BBC News website, Copenhagen



More people have applied to attend the summit than the Bella Center can hold
Talks are back on track at the UN climate summit after developing countries won significant concessions.

Informal talks will proceed along the two "parallel tracks" favoured by developing countries, in particular on maintaining the Kyoto Protocol.

But the final high-level session starts on Tuesday evening, and much remains to be done if a deal is to be signed here.

Non-governmental organisations are protesting that many campaigners will be turned away from the venue.

Far more people have applied to attend the summit than Copenhagen's Bella Center can hold, and NGO numbers will be progressively reduced during the rest of the week, partly for security reasons as heads of state and government arrive.

UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown will be one of the first leaders here, arriving on Tuesday evening.

Protocol matters

Following Monday's suspension of talks on points raised by the African group, supported by the wider G77-China bloc of developing countries, some sessions ran long into the night as negotiators tried to make up lost time.

THE WEEK AHEAD

Tues 15 Dec - Prince Charles delivers a speech on the sustainability of human society; UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown arrives

Weds 16 Dec - High-level segment begins; protests expected inside and outside centre

Fri 18 Dec - More than 100 world leaders, including Barack Obama, attend closing session

The Danish conference hosts had been accused of trying to sideline negotiations on the Kyoto Protocol by packaging discussion of outstanding difficult issues from across the various strands into a single informal session.

Developing countries are adamant that developed nations still inside the protocol - all except the US - must commit to further emission cuts under its aegis.

After discussions with the Danes and UN climate convention officials, the informal talks were split as the G77-China bloc had demanded.

One group, chaired by Germany and Indonesia, is examining further emission cuts by developed nations under the Kyoto Protocol.

Another, chaired by the UK and Ghana, is looking at long-term financing to help poorer countries develop along "green" lines and protect themselves against impacts of climate change.

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Certified Emission Reduction (CER)
Clean

Coal Technology Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Climate change CFCCO2 Commitment period COP15 Country in transition Dangerous climate change Deforestation Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) EU Burden-sharing agreement Feedback loop Flexible mechanism Fossil_fuels Geological sequestration Global average temperature Global energy budget Global dimming Global warming Global Warming Potential (GWP) Greenhouse gases (GHGs) Greenhouse effect Hockey stick IPCC Joint implementation Kyoto Protocol LDCs LULUCF Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate Methane Mitigation Nairobi work program Natural greenhouse effect Non-annex I countries Ocean acidification ppm (350/450) Per-capita emissions Pre-industrial levels of carbon dioxide REDD Renewable energy Stern review Technology transfer Tipping point Twenty-twenty-twenty (20-20-20) UNFCCC Waxman-Markey energy bill Weather

Suggest additions

Glossary in full

A senior Chinese source, meanwhile, confirmed to BBC News that China would not accept any money from the west for these purposes.

This is likely to carry political significance in the US, where some legislators are adamant that domestic carbon-cutting measures must not hand funds to the country set to emerge as its biggest economic rival.

Here, the positions of the world's two largest emitters are very much at odds, with China rejecting US demands that its emission curbs must be subject to international verification.

'Losing legitimacy'

After the chaos over access to the Bella Center on Monday, when thousands of people already registered to attend queued for hours in a vain attempt to pick up their accreditation, progressively tighter restrictions are being applied to NGOs for the rest of the week. Numbers will be limited to 7,000 on Tuesday and Wednesday, falling to 1,000 on Thursday and just 90 on Friday.

A group of more than 50 organisations including ActionAid, Friends of the Earth and CAFOD has written to the Danish hosts and the UN climate convention secretariat accusing them of "undemocratic" behaviour.

"The presence of the public ensures that the substance of the matters being discussed at the negotiations are subject to public scrutiny," the letter says.

"The process of arriving at these outcomes must be fair, open and transparent. The legitimacy of this process is at stake."

An unprecedented number of people - 45,000 - have registered to join the conference, about half of them from NGOs. The centre's capacity is only 15,000.

Head space

The final high-level segment of the summit, due to be attended by about 120 heads of state and government, will open on Tuesday evening with speeches from dignitaries including UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Danish Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen and Prince Charles.

Speaking to reporters before flying out from New York, Mr Ban warned that "time is running out".

"If everything is left to leaders to resolve at the last minute, we risk having a weak deal or no deal at all," he said.

"And this would be a failure of potentially catastrophic consequence."

Prince Charles's speech will look at climate change in the context of wider concerns about the sustainability of human society.

He is expected to argue that although the human race has created the modern problem of climate

change, the human race also has the capacity to solve it.
Richard.Black-INTERNET@bbc.co.uk

15 December 2009

Copenhagen negotiators struggle to save talks



There are only days left before the conference closes on Friday

Climate change negotiators have been working through the night in Copenhagen to try to rescue plans for a global agreement from collapse.

Heads of state start to appear in the Danish capital later in the day, ahead of a hoped-for signing on Friday.

But several issues remain to be solved ahead of the summit's climax.

Correspondents say suspicions among poor countries that rich ones are ganging up on them - which prompted a walk-out on Monday - remain strong.

They say that with the end of the conference looming, the general hope is that minds will increasingly become concentrated and real concessions emerge from both sides.

THE WEEK AHEAD

Tues 15 Dec - Prince Charles delivers a speech on the dangers of deforestation; UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown arrives

Weds 16 Dec - Ministerial teams take over negotiations as the high level segment begins

Fri 18 Dec - More than 100 world leaders, including Barack Obama, attend closing session

In one hopeful sign, China has indicated it will not accept any money from a fund being set up by the West to help poorer nations tackle climate change.

A senior Chinese source told BBC News that China will not accept a single dollar.

The possibility had upset many in the United States, who feel Beijing is now well-enough off to pay to clean up its own act.

Chinese deputy foreign minister He Yafei said in Copenhagen that Beijing was committed to achieving a good outcome.

China's willingness to make a deal pleases the rich West, but alarms some poor countries, says the BBC's environment analyst Roger Harrabin.

They fear China will strike a compromise with other big players that will not be strict enough to protect the most vulnerable nations from climate change, our correspondent adds.

Deep distrust

Developing nations staged a five-hour walkout on Monday, only returning after their key demand - separate talks on the Kyoto Protocol - was met.

COPENHAGEN LATEST

- Talks suspended when developing countries withdraw co-operation

- Ocean acidification threatens food supplies, the UK environment secretary warns
- Danish police detain 968 people at a rally near the summit
- A draft final text calls on richer nations to cut emissions by 25-45% from 1990 levels by 2020
- EU leaders make a 7.2bn-euro pledge to help poorer nations cope with climate change

Updated: 20:10 GMT, 14 December

- Climate change in graphics
- Q&A: Copenhagen summit

The bloc, which represents countries vulnerable to climate change, has been adamant that rich nations must commit to emission cuts beyond 2012 under the Kyoto Protocol.

They have been arguing for a "twin track" approach, whereby countries with existing targets under the Kyoto Protocol (all developed nations except the US) stay under that umbrella, with the US and major developing economies making their carbon pledges under a new protocol. But the EU and the developed world in general has promoted the idea of an entirely new agreement, replacing the protocol.

Talks were halted most of the day, until conference president Connie Hedegaard of Denmark assured developing countries she was not trying to kill the Kyoto Protocol.

'Catastrophic failure'

The White House said President Barack Obama, who is due to address the conference on Friday, was "committed to pursuing an accord that requires countries to take meaningful steps". But spokesman Robert Gibbs acknowledged there was a great deal of work to be done.

CLIMATE CHANGE GLOSSARY

Select a term from the dropdown:

Glossary
 Adaptation
 Annex I countries
 Annex II countries
 Anthropogenic climate change
 Aosis
 AR4
 Atmospheric aerosols
 Bali action plan
 Bali roadmap
 Baseline for cuts
 Biofuel
 Black carbon
 Boxer-Kerry bill
 Business as usual
 Cap and trade
 Carbon capture and storage (CCS)
 Carbon dioxide (CO2)
 Carbon dioxide (CO2) equivalent
 Carbon footprint
 Carbon intensity
 Carbon leakage
 Carbon neutral
 Carbon offsetting
 Carbon sequestration
 Carbon sink
 Certified Emission Reduction (CER)
 Clean Coal Technology
 Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)
 Climate change
 CFCCO2
 Commitment period
 COP15
 Country in transition
 Dangerous climate change
 Deforestation
 Emission Trading Scheme (ETS)
 EU Burden-sharing agreement
 Feedback loop
 Flexible mechanism
 Fossil_fuels
 Geological sequestration
 Global average temperature
 Global energy budget
 Global dimming
 Global warming
 Global Warming Potential (GWP)
 Greenhouse gases (GHGs)
 Greenhouse effect
 Hockey stick
 IPCC
 Joint implementation
 Kyoto Protocol
 LDCs
 LULUCF
 Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate
 Methane
 Mitigation
 Nairobi work program
 Natural greenhouse effect
 Non-annex I countries
 Ocean acidification
 ppm (350/450)
 Per-capita emissions
 Pre-industrial levels of carbon dioxide
 REDD
 Renewable energy
 Stern review
 Technology transfer
 Tipping point
 Twenty-twenty-twenty (20-20-20)
 UNFCCC
 Waxman-Markey energy bill
 Weather

"There's no doubt that there are issues that will remain outstanding for quite some time," Mr Gibbs said.

UN chief Ban Ki-Moon, speaking to reporters in New York before he was to leave for Copenhagen, warned that "time is running out".

"If everything is left to leaders to resolve at the last minute, we risk having a weak deal or no deal at all. And this would be a failure of potentially catastrophic consequence."

Campaign group Greenpeace said the summit had five days "to avert climate chaos".

Emissions targets so far offered by Western leaders such as Mr Obama amounted to "peanuts", the group added.

13 December 2009

Climate activists condemn Copenhagen police tactics



Police said the large number of arrests had placed huge pressure on officers

Climate change groups have criticised Danish police for using heavy-handed tactics after they detained 968 people at a rally near the Copenhagen summit.

Mel Evans from Climate Justice Action told the BBC protesters were held for hours in freezing conditions without medical attention, water or toilets.

A police spokesman said almost all of those detained on Saturday had now been released, but a few would be charged.

Tens of thousands marched to press for more decisive action on global warming.

Meanwhile, ministers have started arriving to join other delegates at the Bella Centre for the UN summit, which runs for another week.

Documents prepared by leaders of the conference call on developed nations to cut greenhouse gas emissions by between 25% and 45% of 1990 levels by 2020.

COPENHAGEN LATEST

- A draft deal envisages emission cuts by rich countries of 25-40% from 1990 levels by 2020
- Cuts promised so far come to 18%
- The EU has pledged \$10.6bn over three years to a proposed \$10bn annual fund to help poor countries cope with climate change
 - Environment ministers join summit negotiations
 - More than 110 leaders now due to attend last day on 18 December

On Saturday, the EU joined the US in criticising a draft agreement that says developing nations

would only reduce their emissions if they receive financial help. The EU has offered developing nations a 7.2bn-euro (£6.5bn; \$10.6bn) three-year deal.

"There has been a growing understanding that there must be commitments to actions by emerging economies as well," said Swedish Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren, whose country holds the EU's rotating presidency.

The exact target for limiting temperature rise is unclear amid disputes between various blocs. The UN-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Changes (IPCC) wants to keep the rise to below 2C (3.6F) above pre-industrial levels.

'Breakdown of democracy'

Police said about 30,000 people took part in Saturday's demonstration in the Danish capital, although organisers put the number at 100,000.

Many chanted and carried banners reading "Demand climate justice", "The world wants a real deal" and "There is no Planet B".

Danish police made a number of arrests during the protests

The protest was mainly peaceful, but some protesters threw bricks and smashed windows in the city centre, while others set off fireworks.

Large numbers of mainly young people were later detained. TV pictures showed the police putting the demonstrators in seated lines on the street with their hands tied behind their backs. They were later removed on buses.

Ms Evans said the actions of the police were appalling.

"People were very scared and they were held for about four hours on the ground. They weren't able to have any medical attention, any water, and weren't allowed to have any toilet facilities," she told BBC Five Live.

"People were there in freezing conditions urinating on themselves and being held in lines like, essentially like animals."

In pictures: Climate protests

The World Development Movement's director, Deborah Doane, condemned the authorities for what she said was a "complete violation of the right to protest and a step towards the breakdown of democracy".

In a statement, Copenhagen police said a large group of protesters had organised themselves in a so-called "black bloc", in which they put on masks - an illegal action at a demonstration in Denmark. Officers then decided to "seal off" the group from the march.

The force said the large number of arrests had "produced a huge amount of pressure" on officers responsible for transporting, receiving and registering detainees.

"This [meant] a large number of detainees got to sit disproportionately long on the street before transportation was possible. Copenhagen Police will evaluate if there is an opportunity for a faster way of transporting detainees away from the scene in the future," it added.

12 December 2009

Copenhagen police detain 900 in climate change rally

Danish police made a number of arrests during the protests

Police in the Danish capital Copenhagen say 900 protesters have been detained following a huge climate change rally.

The move came after youths threw bricks and smashed windows as more than 30,000 demonstrators marched to demand action at the UN climate change summit.

Marches have also been held in Australia, Hong Kong, Jakarta and the Philippines.

Ministers have started arriving to join other delegates at the UN conference which runs for another week.

Documents prepared by the conference's leaders call on developed nations to cut greenhouse gas emissions by between 25 and 45% of 1990 levels by 2020.

EU leaders are offering developing countries a three-year deal that would pay them 7.2bn euros (£6.5bn; \$10.6bn) to help cope with climate change.

The exact target for limiting temperature rise is unclear amid disputes between various blocs.

'Restrictive' policing

Danish police estimate that some 30,000 people joined the march while organisers put the number at 100,000.

AT THE SCENE



Matt McGrath, BBC News, Copenhagen

The colourful parade, with some people dressed in polar bear suits, departed Parliament Square amid tight security.

According to reports, police moved in when masked youths threw bricks and smashed windows in the centre of the city.

Denmark's parliament recently passed controversial laws giving police powers of pre-emptive arrest of anyone they believe is likely to break the law.

According to a source close to the Danish government, those people who were "pre-emptively detained" will be held for up to four hours. Those arrested will be brought before a judge within 24 hours.

They marched 6km (4 miles) across the city to the conference centre where negotiators and ministers are meeting.

After violence erupted, large numbers of mainly young people were detained.

TV pictures showed the police putting the demonstrators in seated lines on the street with their hands tied behind their backs. They were later removed on buses.

Henrek Suhr, spokesman for Copenhagen police, told the BBC that those detained were being well cared for.

Simon Sheikh, of the Australian social and political network "Get Up", said he had witnessed the detentions from his apartment in the centre of the city.

"The police rounded up protesters in a pre-planned manoeuvre," he told the BBC.

"It was unprovoked. They rounded up a group, including women and children, and pushed them into a store, before splitting them into groups and handcuffing them."

COPENHAGEN LATEST

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- Environment ministers join summit negotiations
- More than 110 leaders now due to attend last day on 18 December

Updated: 13:50 GMT, 12 December

- Climate change in graphics
- Q&A: Copenhagen summit

Activists are arguing for an ambitious, legally binding agreement on emissions cuts to be signed by world leaders at the summit's conclusion at the end of next week.

"This is the right time to shout out and let leaders know this is serious business for us all. Lets hope they listen," Lin Che, a 28-year-old student from Taiwan, told Reuters news agency. A number of famous figures said they would join the protest, among them Bollywood actor Rahul Bose, model and photographer Helena Christensen and former UN human rights commissioner Mary Robinson.

'Safe climate'

In Australia, where events were held as part of the country's fifth Walk Against Warming, the largest protest was held in Melbourne.



In pictures: Climate protests

The march closed with protesters spelling out the message "Safe Climate - Do It!" on the ground.

Organisers said aerial photographs had been taken and would be sent to delegates at the talks in Copenhagen.

In Adelaide, activist James Dannenberg told state radio: "We want [world leaders] to bring home a treaty, we want them to stand by the Pacific and our neighbours there.

"And we want them to deliver and ensure a safe climate future for us all."

Thousands of demonstrators also gathered in front of Australia's parliament house in the capital, Canberra.

Protesters descend on Copenhagen



Demonstrators have been pouring onto the streets of central Copenhagen throughout the day [AFP]

Thousands of protesters have gathered in the Danish capital Copenhagen to call on governments at the UN global climate change summit to commit to a deal. Police detained at least 400 people during demonstrations on Friday in which activists attempted to disrupt meetings between corporations and industry lobby groups, accusing them of being "climate criminals".

Most of the protesters arrested were masked youths dressed in black who threw bricks and firecrackers and smashed windows in the city centre.

Around 50 police in riot gear moved in, forcing the protesters to the ground and bundling them into vans.

Police later followed activists as they wound through the narrow streets of central Copenhagen to the sound of drums, whistles and horns and chants of "Our climate - Not your business".

The procession then split up, with activists fanning out to several locations, including the venue of a business conference.

Lars Borg, a Copenhagen police spokesman, said protesters did not reach the Bella Centre conference facility, where representatives from about 190 governments are negotiating a new global climate agreement.



Tania Page, Al Jazeera's correspondent reporting from Copenhagen, said the protests were largely peaceful.

"It has been a largely peaceful demonstration and something of a family affair really hoping to

push home to the delegates here that the public won't stand for anything less than a firm concrete commitment and agreement to cut carbon emissions and to fork out the money to help poorer nations because they are the ones who are the front line of this," she said.

"There is still a level of confidence that there will be a political agreement by the end of the week but I don't think that anyone inside the conference believes there will be a legally binding agreement which is what the demonstrators are calling for.

Draft deal

A draft climate pact unveiled at the summit on Friday revived hopes that the UN talks might be able to pin down a deal, but developing nations said they needed more financial commitment from richer nations.

With less than a week until more than 110 world leaders descend on the talks, the proposal that would at least halve global emissions by 2050 sought to bridge some of the long-standing rifts between rich and poor nations.

A European Union offer of \$10.8 bn of climate aid over the next three years was welcomed by the UN and the Danish hosts.

Connie Hedegaard, the Danish minister presiding over the negotiations, said: "Things are progressing."

Yvo de Boer, head of the UN Climate Change Secretariat, said the draft text marked a "step change" in the negotiations.

Chinese anger

China, the world's largest carbon emitter ahead of the US, said rich nations needed to provide long-term cash if they wanted poor nations to agree long-term emissions goals.

"I doubt the sincerity of developed countries in their commitment. Why are they not talking about a commitment of providing funds through 2050?" He Yafei, the Chinese vice-foreign minister, said late on Thursday.

"That will make them credible when they are asking for an emissions reduction by 2050."



Protesters were upbeat during the festive season in the Danish capital [AFP]

Todd Stern, US President Barack Obama's special envoy for climate change, said earlier this week that he could not "envision" public funds for climate change going to China.

China's He said that was a dangerous betrayal of a globally agreed principle that rich nations had a responsibility to help poor nations adapt to a warmer world and cut emissions.

"I was shocked, personally, to read the American negotiator's [comment]," he told a news conference.

"I don't want to say the gentleman is ignorant, because he is very well educated, but I think he lacked common sense when he made such a comment vis-a-vis funds for China. Either lack of

common sense or he is extremely irresponsible."

"When people mention US and China together, they tend to forget that these two countries belong to totally different categories. The US is part of the developed countries ... China is part of developing countries. You cannot mix the two."

African nations said they were still considering the draft, but also were unhappy about financing.

The draft text covers both an extension of the existing UN Kyoto Protocol, whose first phase ends in 2012, and a parallel track of talks.

The text offers a range for global cuts in greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from burning fossil fuels, of at least 50 per cent by 2050 from 1990 levels.

12 December 2009

Climate change protesters march in Australia



Thousands of protesters marched in cities across Australia and the region

Thousands of people have taken to the streets in Australia as part of global protests to demand action from leaders at UN climate talks in Copenhagen.

Marches took place in Melbourne, Sydney and other cities. Activists also met in Hong Kong, Jakarta and the Philippines.

The action comes ahead of planned major protests in Copenhagen, where tens of thousands are expected to march 4 miles (6km) to the climate summit venue.

Security is tight as environment and climate ministers arrive to join talks.

More than 50 protesters were arrested in the city following a smaller demonstration on Friday.

Organisers say they expect between 60,000 and 80,000 protesters from around the world to join Saturday's march, which is due to leave Christiansborg Castle at 1300 GMT.

COPENHAGEN LATEST

- A draft deal envisages emission cuts by rich countries of 25-40% from 1990 levels by 2020
- Cuts promised so far come to 18%
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- More than 110 leaders now due to attend last day on 18 December

Updated: 20:30 GMT, 11 December

- [Climate change in graphics](#)

- Q&A: Copenhagen summit

The activists will cross Copenhagen before reaching the conference centre where negotiators and ministers are meeting.

Extra police have been deployed at Denmark's land and sea borders and in the city in a bid to prevent violent far-left groups joining the protest, the AFP news agency reports.

Danish police estimate the crowd will number about 50,000.

A number of well known figures are planning to join the demonstration, among them Bollywood actor Rahul Bose, model and photographer Helena Christensen and former UN human rights commissioner Mary Robinson.

The environmental campaign group Friends of the Earth also planned to bring demonstrators out on to the streets of Copenhagen on Saturday morning.

'Safe climate'

In Australia, where events were held as part of the country's fifth Walk Against Warming, the largest protest was held in Melbourne.

The march closed with protesters spelling out the message "Safe Climate - Do It!" on the ground.

Organisers said aerial photographs had been taken and would be sent to delegates at the talks in Copenhagen.

In Adelaide, activist James Dannenberg told state radio: "We want [world leaders] to bring home a treaty, we want them to stand by the Pacific and our neighbours there.

"And we want them to deliver and ensure a safe climate future for us all."

Thousands of demonstrators also gathered in front of Australia's parliament house in the capital, Canberra.

On Friday, European Union leaders agreed a three-year deal to pay 7.2bn euros (£6.5bn; \$10.6bn) to help poorer nations cope with climate change.

But leaders of developing countries and some aid agencies described the sum offered by the EU as inadequate.

Meanwhile, in Copenhagen, officials released a draft text of a possible final deal in which rich countries are asked to raise their pledges on greenhouse gas emissions cuts.

11 December 2009

EU climate cash pledge 'not enough' say small nations



Global warming threatens some of the world's most vulnerable communities

Developing countries and aid agencies have derided the latest pledges by richer states to tackle global warming.

EU leaders ended a summit in Brussels having agreed to pay 7.2bn euros (£6.5bn; \$10.6bn)

over three years to help poorer nations cope with climate change.

The EU contribution is part of a global "fast start" package being debated at the UN Copenhagen summit.

But leaders of poorer nations described the sum as inadequate.

The 7.2bn euros is Europe's contribution to a proposed package of \$10bn (7bn euros) a year designed to help Africa, island nations and other vulnerable states cope with climate change from next January until 2012.

The money could help them boost coastal protection, deal with droughts, prevent deforestation and use more solar and wind energy.

COPENHAGEN LATEST

- A draft deal envisages emission cuts by rich countries of 25-40% from 1990 levels by 2020
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Updated: 20:30 GMT, 11 December

- Climate change in graphics
- Q&A: Copenhagen summit

Groups representing poorer nations most at risk from climate change added their voices to the call for a bigger financial commitment.

Lumumba Stanislaus-Kaw Di-Aping, representing the G77 bloc of developing nations and China at the Copenhagen talks, described the EU pledges as "insignificant".

"I believe [the funds] are not only insignificant, they actually breed even more distrust on the intentions of European leaders on climate change," he said, quoted by AFP news agency.

Bruno Tseliso Sekoli, chairman of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) bloc, told the BBC that the EU pledge "cannot be enough for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the LDCs".

"Any money that would flow from the developed to developing worlds would be welcome but these numbers are very, very low," he said.

Dessima Williams, chairwoman of the Alliance of Small Island States (Aosis), said even the global sum on the table at Copenhagen was not enough.

"We just had a (Commonwealth) meeting in Trinidad where the figure of \$10bn per year was put on the table and that was woefully inadequate," she said.

"One cannot do sustainable development - making the transformations in energy for example - with such a small pot of money."

'Recycled' money

Some aid groups said the EU pledges included funds from existing budgets.

“ This money is not even new - it's made up of a recycling of past promises, and payments that have already been made ”

Tim Gore

Oxfam EU climate change adviser

UK-French rivalry set aside

Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, whose nation held the rotating EU presidency during the summit, acknowledged that the pledges were "a combination of new and old resources".

"Almost all of the money is likely to be simply a relabelling of existing aid commitments," said Anne-Catherine Claude, of ActionAid.

"Many EU members have a track record of repackaging or re-announcing existing aid commitments. This appears to be the case here too," she added.

Oxfam EU climate change adviser Tim Gore was also disappointed.

"In Brussels today, EU leaders only offered small sums of short-term cash. Worst of all, this money is not even new - it's made up of a recycling of past promises, and payments that have already been made," he added.

'Fair share'

Announcing the deal at the Brussels summit, Mr Reinfeldt said all 27 EU member nations would contribute and that the EU was doing its "fair share".

The UK was the largest contributor at £500m (\$800m; 553m euros) a year followed by France and Germany.

Eastern European countries, which had protested they were too poor to pay, have also made contributions although some are merely symbolic, says the BBC's Oana Lungescu in Brussels. Many, like Poland, say they are unable to give cash and have offered instead a percentage of the future sale of unused carbon credits.

But diplomats admit there is no guarantee how many of those will be sold, our correspondent adds.

10 December 2009

EU summit struggles to agree climate pledge



Swedish PM Fredrik Reinfeldt says officials will work through the night

EU leaders have so far failed to agree how much aid the bloc will give to developing nations to tackle the effects of global warming.

On the first day of a two-day summit in Brussels EU leaders had wanted to agree a joint offer of around 6bn euros (\$9bn; £5.5bn) over three years.

But analysts say wealthier states are struggling to convince poorer Eastern European countries to contribute.

Officials said that consultations would continue overnight.

The BBC's Jonny Dymond in Brussels says there will be some serious arm twisting through the small hours as the EU tries to come up with the pledges.

"We will have a better figure tomorrow than we had tonight," Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt told a news conference.

"We have [EU] member states with [International Monetary Fund] programmes, with huge deficits. This is on a voluntary basis, and already more than half of the states have provided figures."

'Swift decisions'

The money being sought at the Brussels summit is for a "fast start" contribution to help the world's poorest nations tackle rising sea levels, deforestation, water shortages and other

consequences of climate change between 2010 and 2012.

“ I call upon you - put a figure on the table. We demanded this in the European Parliament resolution in November ”

Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament

Climate pressures cloud EU summit

EU climate package explained

France gets key Commission job

Several wealthy EU states have announced significant contributions, but it is not yet clear what Germany, France and Eastern European nations are ready to contribute.

As the summit got under way, pledges had been made for around 2bn euros.

The largest contributions came from Britain at 883m euros and Sweden - which currently holds the rotating EU presidency - at 765m euros. The Netherlands has pledged 300m euros and Denmark 160m.

The figures are totals spread over three years - 2010-2012.

President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek told EU leaders that "swift, binding, global decisions" were also needed on climate targets.

"I call upon you - put a figure on the table. We demanded this in the European Parliament resolution in November," he said.

As EU leaders arrived for the summit there was a moment of drama when Greenpeace activists breached the security cordon disguised as an official delegation.

They held up banners reading "EU: Save Copenhagen" before they were moved aside by security guards.

Bankers' bonuses

Financial matters will also be discussed at the twice-yearly summit.

Earlier on Thursday, momentum was building for a tax on bankers' bonuses. The leaders of France and Germany swung behind the idea after the UK announced a one-off supertax on bonuses in a pre-Budget report.

The enormous level of Greece's debt will also be a concern.

Greek Deputy Finance Minister Philippos Sachinidis said it stood at 300bn euros - its highest level in modern history.

EU Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso said on Thursday he was confident Greece would overcome its problems.

The European Council meeting is the first since the Lisbon Treaty came into effect and Belgium's Herman van Rompuy was elected as its first president.

10 December 2009

EU Brussels summit debates climate change



Greenpeace activists breached security at the summit by dressing as delegates
EU leaders are holding a summit in Brussels, with climate change firmly at the top of the agenda.

On the table at the two-day meeting is how much aid the bloc will give to developing nations to tackle global warming.

Analysts say wealthier members of the 27-nation EU are having to press poorer states in Eastern Europe to contribute to a \$10bn (£6bn) a year fund.

Finance will also be discussed at the twice-yearly summit.

Earlier on Thursday momentum was building for a tax on bankers' bonuses.

The leaders of France and Germany swung behind the idea after the UK announced a one-off supertax on bonuses in a pre-Budget report.

Writing in Thursday's Wall Street Journal, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and French President Nicolas Sarkozy said a one-off tax should be "considered a priority".

The European Council meeting is the first since the Lisbon Treaty came into effect and Belgium's Herman van Rompuy was elected as its first president.

The President of the European Parliament, Jerzy Buzek, told EU leaders that "swift, binding, global decisions" were needed on climate targets.

“ I call upon you - put a figure on the table. We demanded this in the European Parliament resolution in November ”

Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament

Climate pressures cloud EU summit

EU climate package explained

France gets key Commission job

"We have called on the developed countries to reduce emissions by 25-40% by 2020, and expect developing countries to achieve cuts of between 15% and 30%," he said.

"We know approximately how much this will cost the [European] Union - no less than 30bn euros (£27bn, \$44bn) per year. It is important for this burden to be shared fairly among the member states. We should respect the principle of mutual solidarity."

He added: "This meeting is decisive. This meeting will determine the funding for the immediate aid required by developing countries from next year to 2012 - before the new agreement comes into force.

"I call upon you - put a figure on the table. We demanded this in the European Parliament resolution in November."

The figure of \$10bn (£6bn) a year for three years is the current proposed funding to help poor countries adapt to climate change being discussed at the UN climate summit in Copenhagen.

Security scare

As EU leaders arrived for the twice-yearly Brussels summit there was a moment of drama when environmental protesters breached the security cordon disguised as an official delegation.

Several Greenpeace activists pulled up in a silver minivan similar to those used by summit attendees.

They burst out with banners reading "EU: Save Copenhagen" before they were moved aside by security guards.

They were urging EU nations to boost their commitments to achieve success at the conference in the Danish capital.

Other issues sure to concern EU leaders include Greece's enormous level of debt.

Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, whose country currently holds the EU presidency, said Greece's financial problems should be solved domestically.

Greek Deputy Finance Minister Philippos Sachinidis said earlier that his country's debt stood at 300bn euros (\$442bn; £272bn) - its highest level in modern history.

10 December 2009

Global average temperature may hit record level in 2010

By Mark Kinver

Science and environment reporter, BBC News



A weakening El Nino event will lower global temperatures
Decade 'warmest on record'

The global average temperature could reach a record high in 2010, according to the UK's Met Office.

Forecasters predict that the annual figure for 2010 will be 14.58C (58.24F), 0.58C (1.04F) above the long-term average of 14.0C (58.2F).

They say the combination of climate change and a moderate warming of the tropical Pacific Ocean are set to drive up temperatures next year.

The current record record is 14.52C (58.14F), which was set in 1998.

"The latest forecast from our climate scientists shows the global temperature is forecast to be almost 0.6C above the 1961-90 long-term average," a Met Office statement said.

"This means that it is more likely than not 2010 will be the warmest in the instrumental record that dates back to 1860."

However it added: "A record warm year in 2010 is not a certainty, especially if the current El Nino was to unexpectedly decline rapidly near the start of 2010, or if there was a large volcanic eruption.

"We will review the forecast during 2010 as observation data become available."

The Met Office, in collaboration with the University of East Anglia, maintains one of the three global temperature records that is used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Warming world

The current record year, 1998, was dominated by an "extreme El Nino" condition - the warming of surface waters in the eastern Pacific that releases heat stored in the deep ocean into the atmosphere, raising temperatures globally.

Earlier this week, the Met Office and the World Meteorological Organization said that the first decade of this century was "by far" the warmest since the instrumental record began.

Their analyses also showed that 2009 would almost certainly be the fifth warmest in the 160-year record.

Burgeoning El Nino conditions, adding to man-made greenhouse warming, had pushed 2009 into the "top 10" years, the organisations explained.

10 December 2009

UK Met Office warns carbon emissions must peak by 2020

By Richard Black

Environment correspondent, BBC News website, Copenhagen



The Met Office says global carbon emissions need to peak by 2020 to hit the G8's target. Keeping the global temperature rise under 2C (3.7F) will be almost impossible unless carbon emissions begin to fall within a decade.

That is the conclusion of a new analysis from the UK Met Office (UKMO).

Even if emissions peaked in 2020, there would be a 50% chance of temperatures rising by more than 2C, the target adopted by the G8 at its July summit.

Meeting the lower target of 1.5C favoured by some developing countries is virtually impossible, the UKMO says.



If you go to 2025 before peaking, it's virtually impossible to stay under 2C

Vicky Pope, UK Met Office

Earth Watch - Richard Black's blog

Guide to Geo-engineering

Climate clouds EU summit

The findings come from the Avoid programme, run by the Met Office in conjunction with other UK research institutions under government funding.

The latest results were presented at the UN climate summit in Copenhagen.

The Avoid programme aims to use the latest scientific understanding to make risk-based assessments of the impacts, global and regional, of rising greenhouse gas emissions.

'Virtually impossible'

Echoing the general conclusion of other analyses, including by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Avoid researchers conclude that the earlier global emissions peak and begin to decline, then the gentler that decline can be.

CLIMATE CHANGE GLOSSARY

Select a term from the dropdown:

Glossary
Adaptation
Annex I countries
Annex II countries
Anthropogenic climate change
Aosis
AR4
Atmospheric aerosols
Bali action plan
Bali roadmap
Baseline for cuts
Biofuel
Black carbon
Boxer–Kerry bill
Business as usual
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Carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent
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CFCCO₂
Commitment period
COP15
Country in transition
Dangerous climate change
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Emission Trading Scheme (ETS)
EU Burden-sharing agreement
Feedback loop
Flexible mechanism
Fossil_fuels
Geological sequestration
Global average temperature
Global energy budget
Global dimming
Global warming
Global Warming Potential (GWP)
Greenhouse gases (GHGs)
Greenhouse effect
Hockey stick
IPCC
Joint implementation
Kyoto Protocol
LDCs
LULUCF
Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate
Methane
Mitigation
Nairobi work program
Natural greenhouse effect
Non-annex I countries
Ocean acidification
ppm (350/450)
Per-capita emissions
Pre-industrial levels of carbon dioxide
REDD
Renewable energy
Stern review
Technology transfer
Tipping point
Twenty-twenty-twenty (20-20-20)
UNFCCC
Waxman–Markey energy bill
Weather

Suggest additions

Glossary in full

So peaking in 2018 and shrinking emissions by 4% per year after that would give a 50% chance of keeping warming below 2C, it calculates.

But if the peak came just two years later, in 2020, the decline would then have to be 5% per year for the same odds of staying below 2C.

"If you go to 2025 before peaking, it's virtually impossible to stay under 2C," said Vicky Pope, head of climate science at the Met Office.

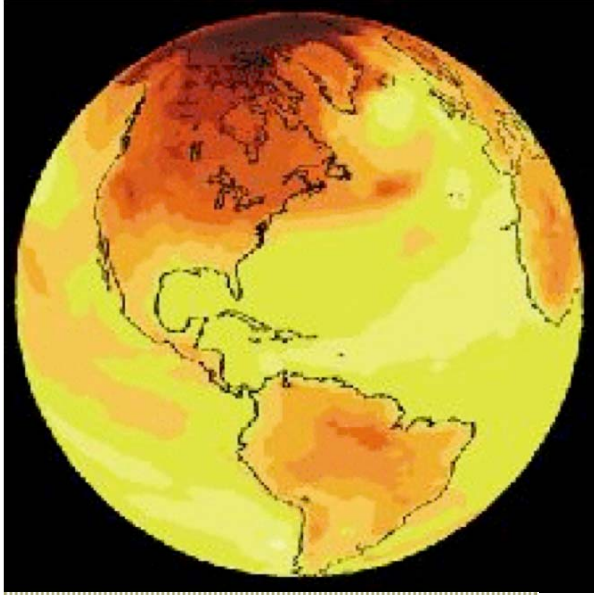
Drawing on socio-economic research from other institutions in the project, the Avoid team believes that cutting emissions by more than 5% per year would be the maximum feasible.

'Negative emissions'

A bloc of small island states and vulnerable African countries are demanding that any new deal on climate change should aim to keep the temperature rise below 1.5C.

But the Met Office analysis suggests that would be very difficult.

"There's no way you'd get a 50% chance of avoiding 1.5C," Ms Pope told BBC News.



Global warming: A future glimpse

Have your say on Copenhagen

"If you reduced everything to zero immediately you'd still get about 1.3C because of the greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere."

Policies to ensure a reasonable chance of remaining under 1.5C would involve "negative emissions" - sucking CO2 out of the air - she said.

And if emissions peak later than 2020, negative emissions - a form of geo-engineering - would be needed even to hit the G8's 2C target.

The concept of geo-engineering has its adherents but it is also fraught with economic, social and technical difficulties.

A report by the UK's Royal Society, released in September, concluded that although the approach might have a role, there were "major uncertainties regarding its effectiveness, costs and environmental impacts", and was no substitute for curbing emissions.

Richard.Black-INTERNET@bbc.co.uk

9 December 2009

Developing countries split over climate measures

By Richard Black

Environment correspondent, BBC News website, Copenhagen



A binding deal is favoured by some, but other developing countries are wary

A major split between developing countries has emerged at the UN climate talks in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Small island states and poor African nations vulnerable to climate impacts laid out demands for a legally-binding deal tougher than the Kyoto Protocol.

This was opposed by richer developing states such as China, which fear tougher action would curb their growth.

Tuvalu demanded - and got - a suspension of negotiations until the issue could be resolved.

The split within the developing country bloc is highly unusual, as it tends to speak with a united voice.

“ Our future rests on the outcome of this meeting ”

Ian Fry, Tuvalu delegate

Earth Watch - Richard Black's blog

After talks resumed in the afternoon, the Tuvalu delegation walked out when it appeared that the issue might be sidelined.

Private discussions will now continue behind the scenes among a small group of concerned countries.

Tuvalu's negotiator Ian Fry made clear that his country could accept nothing less than full discussion of its proposal for a new legal protocol, which was submitted to the UN climate convention six months ago.

"My prime minister and many other heads of state have the clear intention of coming to Copenhagen to sign on to a legally binding deal," Mr Fry said.

"Tuvalu is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change, and our future rests on the outcome of this meeting."

Demonstrators protest in support of Tuvalu's proposal

The call was backed by other members of the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS), including the Cook Islands, Barbados and Fiji, and by some poor African countries including Sierra Leone, Senegal and Cape Verde.

Several re-iterated the demand of small island developing states that the rise in the global average temperature be limited to 1.5C, and greenhouse gas concentrations stabilised at 350 parts per million (ppm) rather than the 450ppm favoured by developed countries and some

major developing nations.

Developing split

Fast-growing economies such as China, India and South Africa oppose the lower target of 350ppm because they feel that meeting it would retard economic development.

Here, they also opposed Tuvalu's call for a new legally-binding protocol to run alongside the existing Kyoto Protocol, arguing that the existing convention and Kyoto agreement are tough enough.

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Suggest additions

Glossary in full

"The main task of this (conference) is to adapt an agreed outcome from the Bali Action Plan [agreed in 2007] and we should very much focus on that," said China's lead negotiator Su Wei. "We have a very valid system to combat climate change."

But the existing agreement is not tough enough for the smaller, more vulnerable members with more to lose from rising sea levels and less to lose in terms of the economic constraints of a tough treaty.

China's negotiator Su Wei told the conference that his country, and the other emerging economies, did care about the problems of small island states; but Jerome Esebei Temengil from Palau's delegation gave a different view.

"We're dying here, were drowning; and some of us know that they don't really care, because we have to beg them," he told BBC News.

"Actions speak louder than words. If they really do care, please have a little listen to us."

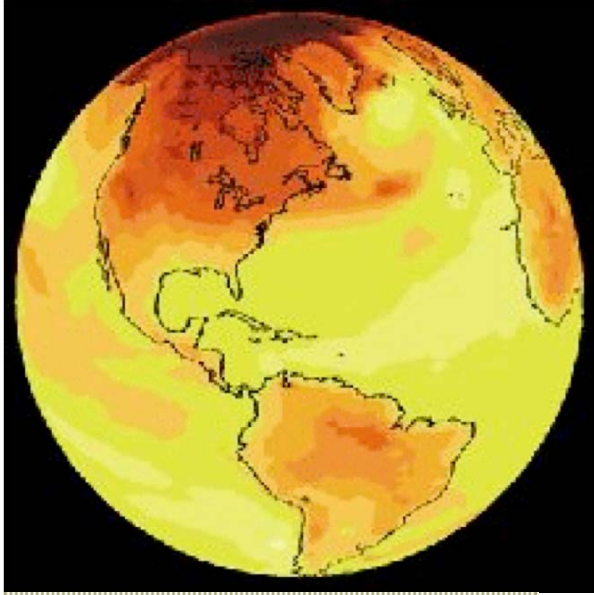
Great divide?

Some observers suggested the session marked a major development in the politics of the climate convention, with small countries prepared to stand up to more powerful neighbours.

"This is the first time we've seen the island nations make such a splash," said Malini Mehra of the India-based Centre for Social Markets.

"The AOSIS call for a new protocol and the way it was denounced by Saudi Arabia, China, and India show that the G77 has now come asunder and the island nations are leading," she told BBC News

"As they must - they have seized the high moral ground."



Global warming: A future glimpse

Have your say on Copenhagen

During the same session, China - and other countries - re-iterated calls for industrialised nations to pledge bigger cuts in their greenhouse gas emissions.

But that has been a familiar call here; the rift between members of the formerly solid developing country bloc is a much less common happening, and may indicate that hopes held out by some countries of signing only a political commitment here may not be enough to placate the poorest and most vulnerable nations.

China has protested against an incident which prevented a top diplomat from entering the vast Bella Center where the conference is underway. Mr Wei told the meeting he is "extremely unhappy" that a Chinese minister was barred from entry on three consecutive days.

He said the unnamed minister has been trying to enter since Monday but failed despite having two security badges made out. Both badges were confiscated by security guards on Wednesday morning.

Richard.Black-INTERNET@bbc.co.uk

Leaked climate draft sparks anger



Developing nations taking part in the United Nations climate change conference in Copenhagen have criticised a leaked document which proposes that more power be granted to rich nations. The document, which was leaked on Tuesday by The Guardian, a British newspaper, also suggests that the UN's negotiating role should be sidelined and that the legally-binding Kyoto protocol be abandoned.

in depth



The Guardian reported that the text was drawn up by representatives of a small group of rich nations. The US, UK and Denmark are thought to be among those involved in the drafting of the proposals.

Developing countries have said that the text is part of a plan by rich nations to set unequal limits on carbon emissions in 2050, according to a confidential analysis of the proposals that The Guardian also obtained.

Unequal emissions target

The analysis says that the text worked on by rich nations is a strategy to get developing countries to agree to specific emission cuts, the newspaper reported.

The text seeks to set a limit on developing nations that would not allow them to emit more than 1.44 tonnes of carbon per person by 2050 - while developed nations will be allowed to discharge 2.67 tonnes per head.

In depth

- Debating global warming
- Earth in 'hottest decade on record'
- Cooling the world
- Timeline: The road to Copenhagen
- On board the climate express

The draft is also understood to call for handing control of climate change finance to the World Bank.

Waldon Bello, the director of "Focus on the Global South", a non-governmental organisation specialising in policy research, said that the text was evidence of a "betrayal" on the part of rich

nations.

"This is a terrible document - the idea that there would be differential limits put on emissions to favour the north [and] the fact that there would be abandonment of the only legitimate framework, which is the Kyoto Protocol," he said.

"This is not what developing countries were expecting. They were expecting the north to make a serious offer and this is definitely not a serious offer at this point in time. This shows that there is just no 'give' when it comes to the north."

Funding gap

On the same day that the text was leaked, a senior Chinese negotiator told reporters in Copenhagen that the US's emissions target was not notable, that the EU's was not enough, and that Japan's came with impossible conditions.

He also criticised talk of developed nations contributing \$10bn annually to poor countries to help them cope with climate change, saying that more money is needed.



The US, UK and Denmark are thought to be involved in drafting the document [AFP] Estimates of how much it would cost to enact a climate change plan vary widely.

Nicholas Stern, the British government adviser on climate change, says developing countries could use \$130bn dollars per year.

The bulk of it, \$75bn, would be spent on coping with the effects of climate change, with another \$40bn going towards research and development of greener technologies and \$15bn for forest conservation.

Those estimates are much lower than those given by the World Bank, which reports that poor countries would need \$550bn dollars a year - including \$400bn for technology development and \$150bn to cope with the effects of climate change.

If global temperatures are to rise no more than two degrees Celsius by 2050, the International Energy Agency says \$10 trillion of energy-related investments will have to be made over the next two decades.

China attacks rich states at summit



China, the world's biggest carbon emitter, has said it will cut 'carbon intensity' by 45 per cent by 2020 [EPA]

China has lashed out at the developed world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases for setting themselves what it called unremarkable - and even deceptive - targets for cuts.

After weeks of low-key diplomacy, with China pushing hard for a strong commitment from developed countries at the international climate talks in Copenhagen, Su Wei, the head of the Chinese delegation, singled out the US, the EU and Japan for criticism.

Speaking at a news conference on the sidelines of the summit, Su said that the US, the second largest emitter, had set a goal that was "not notable", that the EU's target was "not enough", and that Japan had set impossible preconditions on its commitment.

Last month, China announced a 45 per cent cut in "carbon intensity" by 2020, the first time it set specific targets for cutting carbon emissions and a move Beijing sees as sacrificial and worthy of reciprocation by developed nations.

Carbon intensity does not measure the actual amount of greenhouse gas emissions; it shows the amount emitted relative to its economic output, such as manufacturing and services, in effect measuring the efficiency of energy use.

China, the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, has rarely given news conferences at previous climate talks and the possibility that Beijing and Washington were close to an agreement rose last month when they unveiled emissions targets within a day of each other.

Developing world anger



But two days into the December 7-18 talks in the Danish capital, long-running north-south rifts

have dampened hopes of reaching a robust global agreement among the 192 nations represented at the summit.

Su's remarks came on the same day that a draft Danish proposal for a political agreement caused an uproar at the summit, overshadowing a decision by the US, announced just hours earlier, to treat six greenhouse gases as a human health hazard.

Environmentalists had hailed the US announcement on Monday and welcomed the timing, saying that allowing Barack Obama to sidestep congress to order emission cuts would help the US president convince Copenhagen delegates the US was serious about addressing climate change.

In video

North-south divisions flare again over draft Danish proposal at Copenhagen summit

But just hours later, developing nations were expressing anger over the Danish draft that was circulated informally.

If accurate, the proposal would see more power handed to rich nations, the negotiating role of the UN sidelined and the Kyoto protocol abandoned.

The head of the G77 group of developing countries said on Tuesday that the draft proposal "threatens the success" of the summit.

Sudan's Lumumba Stanislas Dia Ping, who heads the G77 group, said members "will not sign an inequitable deal".

"We can't accept a deal that condemns 80 per cent of the world population to further suffering and injustice," he added.

Su said it was "unfair" to set a limit on nations that were still developing when emissions of developed countries were still going up.

'Not enough for coffin'

He also said a mooted annual \$10bn financial help from rich nations to developing ones as a drop in the ocean.



Su said the US, EU and Japan had not brought enough to the table [AFP]

"If divided by the world population it is less than \$2 per person," he said, adding that this would not cover a coffee in the rich world or a coffin in poor countries that are at the sharp end of climate changes.

Su said that the success of the Copenhagen talks hinged in part on the offer brought to the table by the US, but dismissed the target for 2020 that Obama has laid out, criticising Washington for failing to rein in its emissions, unlike other developed nations.

"Currently the target is to reduce emissions 17 per cent from the 2005 level, I think for all of us this figure cannot be regarded as remarkable or notable," he said.

Su said all the rich nation targets broadly fell short of the emissions cuts recommended by a UN panel of scientists.

The panel has said reductions of 25 to 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020 were needed to avoid the worst effects of global warming.

He called a unilateral EU cut of 20 per cent insufficient, and even a sharper 30 per cent cut - which the bloc has said it may shift to depending on other cuts - was still too easy.

Su also attacked the new government in Japan for setting "impossible" conditions on its offer of a 25 per cent cut by 2020, which was a considerable increase on the goal set by the previous administration.

Japan, the world's fifth largest emitter, has said its commitment depends on ambitious targets being agreed to by major emitters.

Su said the demands on poor nations violated international agreements that allowed them to put economic growth first, and the demands on the US were unrealistic given its clear stance on climate change.

"The Japanese have actually made no commitment because they have set an impossible precondition," he said.

8 December 2009

Draft text divides climate summit

By Richard Black

Environment correspondent, BBC News website, Copenhagen



The leaked text has overshadowed the first day's upbeat speeches

[Earth Watch - Richard Black's blog](#)

Documents leaked at the UN climate summit reveal divisions between industrialised and developing countries over the shape of a possible new deal.

Campaigners say a draft text proposed by the Danish host government would disadvantage poorer nations.

It also sees everything coming under a single new deal, whereas an alternative text from developing countries wants an extension to the Kyoto Protocol.

Other blocs are expected to release their own texts in the next few days.

Chairmen of working groups will then have to turn the various documents into a political document that 100-odd world leaders, plus delegates representing all other nations, could sign at the end of the conference.

The Danish document, plus the alternative text submitted by the BASIC group (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) were discussed by a small group of key countries in Copenhagen last week.

But the Danish proposal had remained under wraps until The Guardian newspaper published it on its website during the second afternoon of the conference.

More ambition

The documents show that at the broadest level, developed and developing worlds are split on several points:

- the level of cuts from developed countries
- the establishment of a target date by which global emissions should peak and begin to fall

- most fundamentally, the shape of any future deal.

The BASIC draft sees emission reductions from developed countries coming under the Kyoto Protocol, whereas the Danish draft envisages all measures coming under a single new agreement.

Although this might appear a technical point, developing countries have so far remained adamant on the retention of the protocol because of the measures it contains on financial assistance and technology transfer, and because it is the only legally binding treaty in existence that makes countries reduce emissions.

“ The only formal texts in the UN process are the ones tabled by the Chairs of this Copenhagen conference at the behest of the parties ”

Yvo de Boer,

UNFCCC executive secretary

Copenhagen: Your questions

The Danish text sets out a vision of greenhouse gas emissions peaking globally by 2020, then declining.

It specifies a 50% emissions cut globally (from 1990 levels) by 2050. Most industrialised nations have already pledged an 80% cut in their own emissions.

According to some calculations, those figures, when combined with projected population growth in the developing world, mean that per-capita emissions in developing countries will remain below those in the west, "locking in" inequality.

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Suggest additions

Glossary in full

Oxfam's Antonio Hill said industrialised nations had to offer bigger cuts than are currently on the table.

"The targets need to rise in ambition and in line with what the science says," he told BBC News.

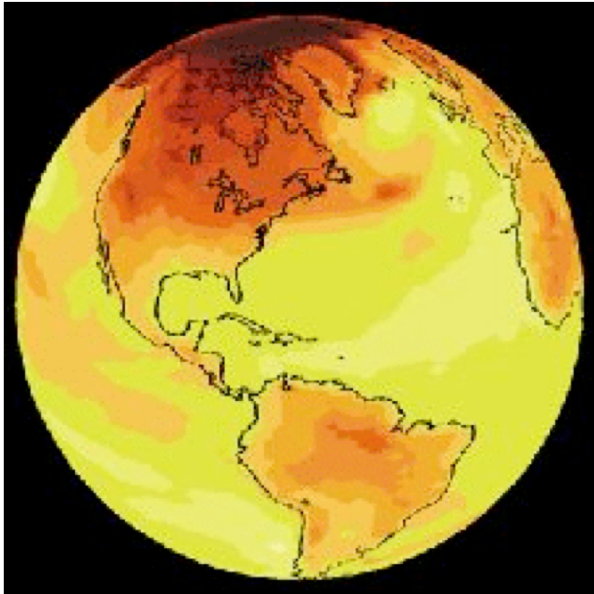
"We think that at least 40% (from 1990 levels by 2020) is needed; and even that is not enough to produce equity."

However, Mr Hill suggested that measures on transferring finance from industrialised to developing countries - to help them curb their emissions and help them protect against the impacts of climate change - were "quite good".

Impossible dream?

Other observers, such as Sol Oyuela from the development agency CAFOD, were more damning.

"The document should not even exist," he said.



Global warming: A future glimpse

"There is a UN legal process which is the official negotiating text; there is no need for any other texts.

"To be working on a rival text is a kick in the teeth to the UN process that has been negotiated for so long."

Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the UN climate convention, also said the document had no formal weight within the negotiations.

"This was an informal paper ahead of the conference given to a number of people for the purposes of consultations," he said.

"The only formal texts in the UN process are the ones tabled by the Chairs of this Copenhagen conference at the behest of the parties."

The UK government dissociated itself from the text.

"At this stage in the negotiation there's inevitably all sorts of texts doing the rounds and more will no doubt appear over the next 10 days," said a spokesman for the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

"The UK is continuing to strive for the most ambitious deal possible, as the prime minister has made clear again today."

Gordon Brown declared earlier that he would favour the EU moving from its current 20% target to 30%, which governments have agreed to do if there is a global deal here.

Over the next few days, small island states, least developed countries, the African bloc and the overall G77/China grouping are expected to present their own texts.

The small island states are expected to demand a legally binding outcome from Copenhagen, which many insiders say is impossible.
Richard.Black-INTERNET@bbc.co.uk

8 December 2009

Copenhagen summit welcomes US emissions curbs

Advertisement

The summit began with a filmed plea from children, and a welcome from Denmark's PM. UN and EU officials have welcomed the US declaration that greenhouse gases are threatening to human health.

An EU spokesman said the announcement showed "a degree of resolve" on the part of President Barack Obama to address climate change.

The US move came as delegates from 192 countries got down to work at the UN climate summit in Copenhagen.

Danish PM Lars Løkke Rasmussen has said the summit is an "opportunity the world cannot afford to miss".

The US declaration could mean the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can order cuts in emissions without the approval of Congress.

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Mitigation - Action that will reduce man-made climate change. This includes action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or absorb greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Suggest additions

Glossary in full

Rajendra Pachauri, chairman of the UN scientific network on climate change, said the Obama administration was "showing what it can do, even while legislation is pending".

"It also sends a powerful signal to Congress. It shows a degree of resolve on the part of the

president," he told the Associated Press news agency.

The environment minister for Sweden - which currently holds the EU presidency - said the outcome of the summit depended mostly "on what will be delivered by the United States and China".

Andreas Carlgren said he would be "astonished" if US President Barack Obama did not offer further concessions when he arrives at the summit next week.

The BBC's Mark Mardell in Washington said the US announcement had been expected for some time, but still sends an important signal to leaders attending the summit that Mr Obama is intent on passing legislation to curb emissions.

'Our chance'

As the Copenhagen summit opened, Mr Rasmussen told delegates the world was looking to them to safeguard humanity.

He said a "strong and ambitious climate change agreement" was needed.

COPENHAGEN IN BRIEF

- 192 countries attending talks, including about 100 leaders
- To discuss emissions cuts and financial measures to combat climate change
- Danish PM urges delegates to deliver "hope for the future"
- South Africa is the latest country to make emissions offer
- Due to end 18 December

Updated: 13:03 GMT, 7 December

- Climate change in graphics
- Copenhagen's key players
- Q&A: Copenhagen summit

"By the end, we must be able to deliver back to the world what was granted us here today: hope for a better future," he said.

Connie Hedegaard, conference president, said political will to address climate change has never been - and never will be - stronger.

"This is our chance. If we miss it, it could take years before we got a new and better one. If ever," she said.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has praised France for taking political leadership in the climate change debate.

He said President Nicolas Sarkozy had been "instrumental in bringing the current stage of the negotiation to where we are now".

Meanwhile British Prime Minister Gordon Brown has said he wants European leaders to commit to deeper cuts in carbon emissions than previously agreed.

The EU has so far only been willing to increase its emissions target if an international deal is reached at the Copenhagen climate summit.

Mr Brown's comments come as the UK's official climate watchdog said a new aviation policy was needed to limit an increase in flights.

The report by the independent Committee on Climate Change said it had discussed ideas like levying extra taxes and issuing flying allowances to reduce air travel.

The main areas for discussion at the Copenhagen summit include:

- Targets to curb greenhouse gas emissions, in particular by developed countries
- Financial support for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change by developing countries
- A carbon trading scheme aimed at ending the destruction of the world's forests by 2030.

Any agreement made at Copenhagen is intended to supplant the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on climate change, which expires in 2012.

7 December 2009

US to regulate greenhouse gas emissions



Lisa Jackson's announcement has been hailed as significant

The US government has declared that greenhouse gases threaten human health.

The move could allow the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to order cuts in emissions without the approval of Congress.

EPA administrator Lisa Jackson said the agency was now "authorised and obligated to make reasonable efforts" to cut greenhouse gases.

The news came as global climate talks got under way in Copenhagen aimed at forging a deal on major emissions cuts.

Ms Jackson said that the scientific evidence surrounding climate change clearly showed that greenhouse gases "threaten the public health and welfare of the American people".

She said the EPA's so-called endangerment finding would "cement 2009's place in history as the year when the United States government began addressing the challenge of greenhouse-gas pollution".

Reports suggest the announcement, which had been in the pipeline for months, was timed to add weight to US President Barack Obama's position at the climate change talks in Copenhagen, allowing him to argue that the US is taking action to combat global warming.

Legislative hurdles

The US House of Representatives passed a bill in June that would cap greenhouse gas emissions and establish a national carbon trading scheme.

But progress of a similar bill through the Senate is not likely before March at the earliest.

In April this year, the EPA decided that carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases could endanger human health and well-being.

The decision was then sent out to public consultation, with people given 60 days - until 23 June - to respond.

An EPA spokeswoman told the BBC that the agency had received more than 300,000 comments and had been working on its response since.

Under a Supreme Court ruling, the EPA's "endangerment finding" was needed to allow the agency to regulate carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases released by vehicles, power plants and factories under the federal Clean Air Act.

7 December 2009

Copenhagen climate change summit poised to open



Copenhagen could be a turning point in climate change, negotiators say

Delegates from 192 countries are gathering in the Danish capital Copenhagen for the opening of the long-awaited UN summit on climate change.

The conference has been described by some scientists as the most important the world has ever seen.

Security is tight as organisers expect 15,000 delegates and 100 world leaders to attend over the next two weeks.

On the eve of the summit, the UN's chief climate negotiator Yvo de Boer said the talks were in excellent shape.

He told the BBC that many countries were now making pledges over curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

ANALYSIS

Matt McGrath, BBC environment correspondent

According to one UN official, this meeting of negotiators is the biggest show on Earth. While that is possibly an exaggeration, organisers say they have been inundated, with more than 34,000 people applying to attend a venue with a capacity of 15,000.

Intense global interest has been heightened by the sense that this is an opportunity for the world to deal decisively with the causes and effects of climate change.

The UN negotiating process has been gradually moving forward for the past two years - but so slowly that officials and government leaders began to acknowledge that a legally binding treaty would not be reached.

But new pledges made in the past few weeks by the US, China and India have re-invigorated the talks - as has confirmation that more than 100 global leaders will be attending.

"Never in 17 years of climate negotiations have so many different countries made so many pledges. It's unprecedented," he said.

Mr de Boer said offers of finance for clean technology for poor countries were also coming through and talks were progressing on a long-term vision of massive carbon cuts by 2050.

South Africa became the latest country to make an offer on cutting emissions - its first quantifiable target.

On the eve of the summit it offered to cut by one-third the growth of its carbon emissions over the next decade - subject to getting more funding and technological help from wealthier countries.

Meanwhile, a new poll commissioned by the BBC suggests that public concern over climate change is growing across the world.

In the survey, by Globescan, 64% of people questioned said that they considered global

warming a very serious problem - up 20% from a 1989 poll.



At the deal's heart must be a settlement between the rich world and the developing world

Jointly written editorial in 56 newspapers in 45 countries

Richard Black: Widening divide?

BBC poll: Climate fears on rise

To stress the importance of the summit, 56 newspapers in 45 countries will publish the same editorial on Monday, warning that climate change will "ravage our planet" unless action is agreed, the London-based Guardian reported.

The editorial - to be published in 20 languages - has been thrashed out by editors ahead of the Copenhagen talks, the newspaper said.

"At the deal's heart must be a settlement between the rich world and the developing world," the editorial says.

Environmental activists plan protests in Copenhagen and around the world on 12 December to encourage delegates to reach the strongest possible deal.

Tens of thousands marched in London and other UK and European cities on Saturday.

'Long-term goal'

Any agreement made at Copenhagen is intended to supplant the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on climate change. Targets set at Kyoto run out in 2012.

COPENHAGEN TALKS

Begin 7 December

To discuss emissions targets and financial measures to combat climate change

Hard bargaining expected in last days of meeting

Due to end 18 December

Climate change in graphics

Where countries stand

Q&A: Copenhagen summit

Negotiations at Copenhagen begin on Monday and more than 100 world leaders will arrive next week to thrash out a deal.

Speakers at the opening session will include Danish Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen and Rajendra Pachauri, head of the UN's panel of climate experts.

World leaders who have pledged to attend include US President Barack Obama, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

The main areas for discussion include:

- Targets to curb greenhouse gas emissions, in particular by developed countries
- Financial support for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change by developing countries
- A carbon trading scheme aimed at ending the destruction of the world's forests by 2030

Outlining his ambitions for the summit, Mr de Boer said: "I think what we will see coming out of Copenhagen is a package of decisions that define a long-term goal.

CLIMATE CHANGE GLOSSARY

Select a term from the dropdown:

Glossary Adaptation Annex I countries Annex II countries Anthropogenic climate change Aosis AR4 Atmospheric aerosols Bali action plan Bali roadmap Baseline for

cuts Biofuel Black carbon Boxer-Kerry bill Business as usual Cap and trade Carbon capture and storage (CCS) Carbon dioxide (CO₂) Carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent Carbon footprint Carbon intensity Carbon leakage Carbon neutral Carbon offsetting Carbon sequestration Carbon sink Certified Emission Reduction (CER) Clean Coal Technology Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) Climate change CFCCO₂ Commitment period COP15 Country in transition Dangerous climate change Deforestation Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) EU Burden-sharing agreement Feedback loop Flexible mechanism Fossil_fuels Geological sequestration Global average temperature Global energy budget Global dimming Global warming Global Warming Potential (GWP) Greenhouse gases (GHGs) Greenhouse effect Hockey stick IPCC Joint implementation Kyoto Protocol LDCs LULUCF Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate Methane Mitigation Nairobi work program Natural greenhouse effect Non-annex I countries Ocean acidification ppm (350/450) Per-capita emissions Pre-industrial levels of carbon dioxide REDD Renewable energy Stern review Technology transfer Tipping point Twenty-twenty-twenty (20-20-20) UNFCCC Waxman-Markey energy bill Weather

Mitigation - Action that will reduce man-made climate change. This includes action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or absorb greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Suggest additions

Glossary in full

"Then, first of all, what will rich countries do to reduce their emissions. Secondly, what will major developing countries do to limit the growth of their emissions and thirdly prompt finance that will allow developing countries to adapt to the impacts of climate change."

However, the BBC's Roger Harrabin, in Copenhagen, says Mr de Boer's optimism is not shared by everyone.

He says some small island states most vulnerable to climate change fear the level of international expectation is so high that leaders will agree to any deal.

Meanwhile, new research unveiled on Sunday suggests that less than one-third of money raised by major airlines in carbon trading schemes goes directly to reducing emissions.

Carbon Retirement based its report on a sample of UN data.

Under the system - set up by the Kyoto protocol - travellers pay for projects that offset emissions caused by their journey.

6 December 2009

UN upbeat on Copenhagen global climate deal



The talks will attempt to curb emissions caused by burning fossil fuels

The UN's top climate official has given an upbeat assessment on the prospects of a global deal at a climate summit which opens in Copenhagen on Monday.

Yvo de Boer told the BBC things were in "excellent shape" as officials from 192 nations began

gathering in Denmark.

Any agreement is intended to supplant the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, aimed at curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

The UN official panel on climate change says emissions must be limited to avoid dangerous global temperature rises.

AT THE SCENE



Richard Black, BBC environment correspondent

There's no doubt that fundamental divisions remain between the various blocs here.

Developing countries are insisting that industrialised nations increase their targets on cutting emissions and put firm pledges of guaranteed money on the table for mitigation and adaptation. The divide appears very wide but UN officials and some delegates are putting an optimistic slant on things, arguing that the 100-odd heads of state and government due in the for last few days will move far enough to secure some kind of agreement.

Read more of Richard's thoughts

"Never in 17 years of climate negotiations have so many different countries made so many pledges. Almost every day now governments are announcing pledges - it's unprecedented," Mr de Boer, executive secretary of the UN climate convention, told the BBC.

"We've got 100 heads of state and government coming to Copenhagen. And, in general, heads of government come to celebrate success, not failure," he said.

Ahead of Monday's talks, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) hit back at claims that human influence on global warming has been exaggerated.

It said it was standing by its findings in response to a row over the reliability of data from a UK university.

Hacked e-mail exchanges from East Anglia's Climatic Research Unit have prompted climate change sceptics to claim that data has been manipulated.

Top Swedish climate official Anders Turesson told the BBC that he hoped the issue "will be investigated".

However, Mr Turesson, who will also be leading EU negotiations as Sweden currently holds the rotating EU presidency, added: "But I cannot see it will in any way affect the negotiations here."

Main issues

The Copenhagen talks are being held in recognition of the fact that the Kyoto Protocol's targets are not sufficient to avoid impacts projected by the IPCC, and run out in 2012.

COPENHAGEN TALKS

Begin 7 December

To discuss emissions targets and financial measures to combat climate change

Hard bargaining expected in last days of meeting

Due to end 18 December

Climate change in graphics

Where countries stand

Q&A: Copenhagen summit

They are set to go on for nearly two weeks, with dozens of world leaders set to attend the later stages.

These include US President Barack Obama, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Almost all countries attending the meeting agree a deal must be reached.

The main areas for discussion include:

- Targets to curb greenhouse gas emissions, in particular by developed countries
- Financial support for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change by developing countries
- A carbon trading scheme aimed at ending the destruction of the world's forests by 2030

Environmental activists are planning demonstrations in Copenhagen and around the world on 12 December, in an attempt to encourage delegates to reach the strongest possible deal.

Tens of thousands marched in London and other UK and European cities on Saturday to urge action.

But expectations for the meeting have fallen, correspondents say.

Whatever is agreed will no longer have a legally binding basis. Instead, experts hope to produce a framework which could lead to the signing of binding final agreements by next year. 'Problem'

The EU, which had sought a legally-binding agreement, has offered a 20% cut in its emissions from 1990 levels by 2020, rising to 30% in the event of a global agreement.

CLIMATE CHANGE GLOSSARY

Select a term from the dropdown:

Glossary
Adaptation
Annex I countries
Annex II countries
Anthropogenic climate change
Aosis
AR4
Atmospheric aerosols
Bali action plan
Bali roadmap
Baseline for cuts
Biofuel
Black carbon
Boxer-Kerry bill
Business as usual
Cap and trade
Carbon capture and storage (CCS)
Carbon dioxide (CO₂)
Carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalent
Carbon footprint
Carbon intensity
Carbon leakage
Carbon neutral
Carbon offsetting
Carbon sequestration
Carbon sink
Certified Emission Reduction (CER)
Clean Coal Technology
Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)
Climate change
CFCCO₂
Commitment period
COP15
Country in transition
Dangerous climate change
Deforestation
Emission Trading Scheme (ETS)
EU Burden-sharing agreement
Feedback loop
Flexible mechanism
Fossil_fuels
Geological sequestration
Global average temperature
Global energy budget
Global dimming
Global warming
Global Warming Potential (GWP)
Greenhouse gases (GHGs)
Greenhouse effect
Hockey stick
IPCC
Joint implementation
Kyoto Protocol
LDCs
LULUCF
Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate
Methane
Mitigation
Nairobi work program
Natural greenhouse effect
Non-annex I countries
Ocean acidification
ppm (350/450)
Per-capita emissions
Pre-industrial levels of carbon dioxide
REDD
Renewable energy
Stern review
Technology transfer
Tipping point
Twenty-twenty-twenty (20-20-20)
UNFCCC
Waxman-Markey energy bill
Weather

Mitigation - Action that will reduce man-made climate change. This includes action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or absorb greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Suggest additions

Glossary in full

The US is pledging to cut its emissions in several stages, beginning with a 17% cut from 2005 levels by 2020.

India and China have both agreed to reduce their "carbon intensity", a measure of the amount of carbon dioxide emitted per unit of GDP.

Washington is currently unable to commit to its pledges for the talks, as a bill to cap its emissions is currently stuck in the Senate and will not be passed before the new year.

Australia is in a similar position, after its opposition-controlled Senate rejected a bill to curb emissions.

Mr Turesson said pledges on cutting emissions put forward so far were not enough.

"We have a problem here. First of all it is very welcome that we now indeed have figures from all major players in the climate change negotiations - and that is indeed positive because then we have a basis for discussions.

"But when we sum up here, they do not suffice, so something must be done here in Copenhagen to enhance the pledges."

Sudan's Lumumba Di-Aping, a lead negotiator for the G77/China bloc at the talks, said: "A deal can be done; the science is clear, the economics are clear, the legal issues are clear.

"The question is that some leaders believe their narrow national economic interests take primacy over the existence and well-being of the entire world."

5 December 2009

Bob Dylan song adopted by Copenhagen climate summit

By Barbara Plett

BBC UN correspondent, New York



Bob Dylan - now 68 - first performed the song in 1962

Bob Dylan has star billing at the climate change summit in Copenhagen... or at least, his music does.

The United Nations has adopted one of his songs, A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall, as its unofficial anthem for the talks.

This is a song best known for channelling the fears of a generation living under the threat of nuclear war.

Dylan performed it for the first time in 1962 at the height of the Cold War, shortly before a plan by Moscow to station atomic missiles in Cuba set off a crisis between the United States and the Soviet Union.

But Hard Rain has weathered well, and is now being invoked to highlight this generation's fear of environmental calamity.

That is testimony to the enduring and universal power of its lyrics, says David Fricke, a senior editor at the Rolling Stone music magazine in New York.

"Let me just quote some lines and see if any sound familiar," he says.

"I've stepped in the middle of seven sad forests; I've been out in front of a dozen dead oceans; I heard the roar of a wave that could drown the whole world.'

"What about this don't we recognise? All of those images and the pictures those words conjure, they're as familiar as a cable news report four minutes ago!"

The song has inspired numerous covers by various musicians. It also inspired a UN environmental photographer, Mark Edwards.

His Hard Rain odyssey began in 1969, when he was rescued by Tuareg nomads after getting lost in the Sahara Desert.

"My rescuer rubbed two sticks together," recalls Mr Edwards.

"He made a fire and we had a nice cup of tea. Then he turned his battered old cassette player on, and Bob Dylan sang 'A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall.'

"I was fascinated by the lyrics, and I decided to illustrate each line of the song. In the years that followed I added pictures as I saw them."

Scepticism

The UN is exhibiting his work at the climate change conference, accompanied by the release of a rare live recording of Bob Dylan performing the song, which the UN is using as an unofficial soundtrack to the summit.

"What the exhibition does, and what Dylan's lyrics allow us to do, is to illustrate all of our global problems," explains Mr Edwards.

“ The idea that the UN is now taking a Bob Dylan tune and putting it up to be the anthem for Copenhagen seems to me kind of silly ”

Max Schulz

Manhattan Institute

"Poverty, population expansion, conventional pollution. If we want to solve climate change, if we really want to deal with this huge issue, we've got to see the whole of it, we've got to respond to this problem in totality."

Others are less enthusiastic, including Max Schulz, an energy expert at the Manhattan Institute think tank.

He is sceptical about doomsday climate change predictions, and he is also a Bob Dylan fan who thinks the UN is exploiting a great song for its own narrow purposes.

"The idea that the UN is now taking a Bob Dylan tune and putting it up to be the anthem for Copenhagen seems to me kind of silly," he says.

"And trying to play on the environmental alarmism of the song seems doubly silly.

"It is not clear from anything that we know about the song that it has anything to do with environmental harm or destruction: it's a bizarre song, it's an inscrutable one."

But regardless of what Bob Dylan did or did not mean, A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall clearly remains an indictment, says David Fricke, and a stark warning to today's leaders.

"It really shows that if we don't address things, the hard rain is not only 'gonna' fall," he says, "but it's been falling already, and we've haven't been paying attention."

4 December 2009

Obama switches climate change visit to end of summit



President Obama believes US leadership will be key

US President Barack Obama has changed his plans to attend the UN summit on climate change in Copenhagen next week, the White House has announced.

He will arrive later than initially planned, moving his appearance from 9 December to 18 December.

The White House said he believed "that continued US leadership can be most productive through his participation at the end of the Copenhagen conference".

The summit aims to draw up a treaty to succeed the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

The president had changed his plans after talks with other leaders and after seeing "the progress that has already been made to give momentum to negotiations".

Climate fund support

US representatives will attend the Copenhagen summit throughout negotiations, the White House added.

“ President Obama's presence is an expression of the growing political momentum towards sealing an ambitious climate deal in Copenhagen ”

Lars Lokke Rasmussen, Danish PM

It said the president believed recent progress included the emissions reduction target announced by the US; China and India setting targets for the first time to reduce their carbon intensity and moves by members of the Commonwealth.

The White House said the president had discussed the state of the negotiations with Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

He concluded there appeared to be growing support for the suggested \$10bn annual fund to help developing countries deal with climate change.

"There are still outstanding issues that must be negotiated for an agreement to be reached, but this decision (to delay his arrival) reflects the president's commitment to doing all that he can to pursue a positive outcome," the White House said in a statement.

Mr Brown welcomed Mr Obama's move, a spokesman said.

Danish Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen echoed Mr Brown.

He said: "President Obama's presence is an expression of the growing political momentum towards sealing an ambitious climate deal in Copenhagen." 2 December 2009

Australian Senate rejects Kevin Rudd's climate plan



Kevin Rudd's hopes to pass the bill by Copenhagen are over
Australia's Senate has rejected a bill on the government's flagship climate change policy for a second time.

Two opposition senators crossed the floor but it was not enough to secure passage of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) to reduce greenhouse gases.

The vote came a day after the opposition Liberal Party ousted leader Malcolm Turnbull, who had promised to back the bill.

Deputy PM Julia Gillard said the bill would be resubmitted next year.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd had hoped to have the legislation passed by next week's Copenhagen summit on climate change.

He had secured opposition backing from Mr Turnbull, but his party revolted and replaced him with climate sceptic Tony Abbott on Tuesday.

The Liberals went on to oppose the bill and it was voted down by 41 votes to 33 in the Senate. 'Calmer heads'

Analysts had suggested Mr Rudd could use the rejection of the bill as a legal trigger for a snap election - after which the bill could be passed at a special joint session of parliament.

1 December 2009

Australia opposition vote deals climate law blow



The emissions scheme row has split the Liberal Party down the middle

Australia's opposition Liberal Party has elected a new leader, amid a searing row over the government's carbon trading laws.

Tony Abbott was chosen to replace Malcolm Turnbull at a Canberra meeting.

Mr Turnbull had backed Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's emissions trading scheme (ETS), but Mr Abbott opposes it.

The government needs the support of the Liberals to pass the legislation in the Senate. The Liberal revolt throws Mr Rudd's plans into turmoil.

Mr Rudd had wanted the legislation to pass the Senate - where his party does not have a

majority - by the start of the Copenhagen climate change summit next week.

Last week he secured Mr Turnbull's support for the bill, prompting the angry reaction from some Liberal lawmakers that triggered the leadership challenge.

Climate centrepiece

Mr Abbott won the final vote against Mr Turnbull by 42 votes to 41. A third challenger, Joe Hockey, was eliminated in first-round voting.

Minutes after his victory, Mr Abbott told a news conference that he would fight the ETS bill.

"We will seek to refer the legislation to [a Senate] committee for further scrutiny. If we cannot get the support for that course of action we will oppose the legislation in the Senate this week," he said.

"I think on something of this magnitude, it is much more important to get it right than to rush it," he added.

The government's immediate hopes of passing the bill now rest on the possibility of some opposition lawmakers rebelling and voting with it.

But if the Senate fails to back the scheme - as now looks likely - Mr Rudd could call a snap election, correspondents say.

Opinion polls suggest he would win such an election and could then pass his climate legislation in a joint sitting of parliament.

But, says the BBC's Nick Bryant in Sydney, the issue is complicated by the onset of the southern summer, when political hostilities tend to be put on hold.

The ETS, aimed at reducing Australia's carbon footprint, is the centrepiece of the government's environmental strategy.

Mr Rudd wants to cut Australia's carbon emissions by up to 25% from 2000 levels by 2020.

But some opposition politicians question the scientific case for global warming and the energy lobby says the move would damage Australia's economy.

Australia has the highest per capita carbon emissions among developed nations and coal is its biggest export.

27 November 2009

China carbon cut target puts pressure on India



Experts say India's emissions are lower than more developed countries

China's decision to unveil carbon emissions targets two weeks before the Copenhagen climate change summit has put pressure on India, a minister says.

Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh has said China's decision is a "wake-up call to India".

India, like China previously, says it will not commit to cuts until developed nations also pledge to meet targets.

China said this week it aimed to reduce its "carbon intensity" by 40-45% by the year 2020, compared with 2005 levels.

Carbon intensity, China's preferred measurement, is the amount of carbon dioxide emitted for each unit of GDP.

According to a recent government report, India's greenhouse gas emissions will rise from about 1.2bn tonnes at present to between 4bn and 7bn by 2030.

'Flexible'

Mr Ramesh says India might have to look to being "flexible" about its stance after China's announcement.

"China has given a wake-up call to India," Mr Ramesh told the Hindustan Times newspaper. "We've to think hard about our climate strategy now and look for flexibility... to avoid being isolated at Copenhagen.

Mr Ramesh said "the flexibility can be achieved without taking binding emission cuts".

Mr Ramesh had said in September that India would be prepared to set itself a non-binding carbon emissions target that could be "shared with the rest of the world".

But no announcement has been made by the government since.

The government report, published in September, says India's per-capita emissions will be much lower than major industrialised countries.

The report will form the basis of India's negotiating position at the Copenhagen climate change conference in December.

At present India accounts for about 5% of global carbon emissions. China, the US and Russia are placed higher.

There is growing international pressure on India to sign up to emission cuts at the December summit, something which it is refusing to do.

China's premier to join Obama at climate-change summit

From Jaime FlorCruz, CNN Beijing Correspondent

November 26, 2009 -- Updated 1012 GMT (1812 HKT)



U.S. President Barack Obama and Chinese Premier Wen came face to face at talks in Beijing, China earlier this month.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to attend Copenhagen climate summit
- China proposes emissions cuts of 40 to 45 percent compared with 2005 levels by 2020
- U.S. President Barack Obama has also confirmed his attendance at the talks
- The climate conference aims to agree a global treaty to fight climate change

RELATED TOPICS

- China
- Global Climate Change
- Barack Obama

(CNN) -- Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao will attend a major U.N. climate-change summit next month in Denmark, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Thursday.

Wen's attendance "will fully demonstrate the great importance the Chinese government attaches to this issue, as well as the political will of the Chinese government to cooperate with the international community," spokesman Qin Gang said at a news briefing.

Have your say at COP15 -- Join the CNN/YouTube debate

Also on Thursday, China's State Council announced plans "to reduce the intensity of carbon dioxide emissions per unit" of gross domestic product in 2020 by 40 percent to 45 percent, compared with its 2005 level, state-run media reported.

The reductions will be "based on our own national conditions" and "is a major contribution to the global effort in tackling climate change," the State Council said, according to the Xinhua news agency.

The news followed U.S. President Barack Obama's announcement Wednesday that he would attend the summit, which is to run from December 7 to 18 in Copenhagen.

The executive secretary of the climate change conference welcomed the announcements from China and the United States but called for rich countries to come up with money to help poor countries meet their goals.

"The U.S. commitment to specific, mid-term emission cut targets and China's commitment to specific action on energy efficiency can unlock two of the last doors to a comprehensive agreement," Yvo de Boer said.

"We still await clarity from industrialized nations on the provision of large-scale finance to developing countries for immediate and long-term climate action," he added.

Obama is prepared to offer a goal of the United States reducing emissions to 17 percent below 2005 levels by 2020, the White House said in a news release.

The White House also reiterated Obama's goal of reducing U.S. emissions by 83 percent by 2050.

Asked about the U.S. offer of a 17 percent reduction, China spokesman Qin said: "The U.S. is the biggest developed country in the world, so it should shoulder its historical responsibilities and obligations, commensurate to its national development level. We also believe the relevant countries and international community should make efforts toward the success of the Copenhagen conference."

The announcements by China and the United States follow the world's top economic powers acknowledging earlier this month that there was no hope of a major breakthrough over climate change by year's end. They acknowledged that at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum in Singapore, dimming hopes for the Copenhagen summit.

But Obama's decision to attend "flies in the face of predictions of failure in Copenhagen well before the conference even begins," said Oxfam America President Raymond C. Offenheiser.

The White House announcement coincided with a briefing from the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change on what must be agreed upon in Copenhagen.

De Boer, the executive secretary, welcomed Obama's decision to attend the talks, saying his presence is "critical to a good outcome."

He said the United States is the only industrialized country that hasn't yet given the group a proposal for cutting carbon emissions. It is "politically critical" that the United States indicate what it can do "in numerical terms" to reduce its climate impact, he added.

Next month's climate talks aim to strike a deal on a successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol, the 1997 pact that has legally binding targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The United States never ratified it, though more than 200 nations did.