

A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the
Durban Climate Change Conference

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Events convened on Wednesday, 7 December 2011

Germany's Low Carbon Energy Strategy

Organized by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU)



Norbert Röttgen, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, compared climate change negotiations to "running a marathon."

Jennifer Morgan, World Climate and Resources Institute, welcomed the Federal German Ministry initiation of this event at a crucial time in the climate change negotiations. She stressed the urgency to massively scale up the development of renewables and energy efficiency, congratulating the German government on showing leadership in transforming a highly industrialized economy into a green economy.

Norbert Röttgen, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, announced a fundamental shift in energy policy towards a low-carbon, energy efficient strategy that will focus its efforts on Germany's development of renewable energy technologies. He made reference to two awards presented to Germany during the last few days, based on Germany's political decision to move away from fossil fuel-generated and nuclear energy sources. Röttgen challenged industrial, developed countries to act credibly in domestic matters if they require countries in the international arena to follow suit. He expressed his conviction that an energy supply based on efficiency and renewables is a responsible way forward; necessary economic strategy; and demonstration that a major country can decouple from resource destruction. He announced Germany's intention to, *inter alia*: phase out nuclear energy by 2022; increase the renewable energy share to 35% by 2020 and 80% by 2025; double the rate of efficiency; make renewable energy sources the pillars of energy supply; facilitate expansion of the current grid with modern grid technologies; and increase energy efficiency for households, working places, and the transport sector. He emphasized the transformation as a development opportunity that will: foster and channel investment; stimulate infrastructure developments; create and maintain employment opportunities; and advance scientific research.

During discussions, Röttgen responded to questions about: employment opportunities as a result of the new policy; equal levels of investments from other EU countries; national voter support maintenance; incentives and subsidies for renewable energy technologies; opposition to large renewable energy structures; strategies of phasing out fossil fuels by 2050; and German financial support in African countries to develop renewable energy technology.

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Warned and Prepared - Disaster Prevented, The Need for Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa and for Involving Children and Youth

Organized by Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Save the Children

Participants watched a film documenting the capacity for youth to contribute to risk deduction, from the children themselves.

Madeleen Helmer, Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre, moderated panel discussions on bridging the gap between scientific data and community responses.

Erik Solheim, Minister of the Environment and International Development, Norway, described a way forward as a combination of: governmental preparation, including scientific-based knowledge and early warning systems; mobilization of people; and improvement of infrastructure. He reflected that although science demonstrates that disasters have become more severe and damaging, government and civil society demonstrate improved preparation to disaster risk reduction.

Rajendra Pachauri, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), highlighted findings from the IPCC Special Report on Extreme Events and the World Meteorological Organization's Global Framework for Climate Services, *inter alia*: implications of exposure increase with vulnerability; extreme temperature ranges and rainfall are increased due to anthropogenic impact; identification of extreme weather prediction for small island and developing countries; and economic implications. He acknowledged the need for capacity building in vulnerable communities, indicating the basis is scientific awareness.

Mary Power, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), explored challenges of governance to early warning systems, requiring additional communication capacity. She explained the purpose of the Global Framework to produce knowledge for action that is empowering to the most vulnerable, and encouraged continued dialogue between data providers and end-users to produce nationally-tailored mechanisms.

Nick Ireland, Save the Children, said science is essential for resource allocation but not necessary for action, and shared efforts made to address the humanitarian effects of climate change. He lamented that where science is needed is often where the largest gaps exist, urging for the downgrading of science to target utilization in vulnerable areas, and advocating for the inclusion of text in negotiations to refer to children and women.

Frehiwot Worku, Secretary General, Ethiopian Red Cross Society, discussed the bridge Red Cross has built to translate and disseminate forecasting data, as well as potential to direct data to global studies. She shared how recent efforts, including the education of youth, has helped to avert humanitarian impacts of climate change and improve climate resiliency.

Njeri Kuria, Kenya Climate Challenge Project (KCCP), noted that panelists failed to acknowledge the: capacity of children; infringement of children's rights; need to simplify information for youth; and need to build a platform for children to share their experiences.



Erik Solheim, Minister of the Environment and International Development, Norway, said that mobilizing young people and women is crucial in disaster risk reduction.



Rajendra K. Pachauri, Chairman, IPCC, explained that economic costs for loss of human life and cultural heritage, and ecosystem services have not been taken into account.

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L-R: Moderator Madeleen Helmer, Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre; Rajendra Pachauri, Chairman, IPCC; Mary Power, WMO; Frehiwot Worku, Ethiopian Red Cross; Nick Ireland, Save the Children; discussed how to manage the unavoidable and avoid the unimaginable.

Questions and Answers with the Global Environment Facility

Organized by the GEF and UNFCCC Secretariat

Moderator Pepetua Latasi, Chair of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), congratulated least developed countries (LDC) on preparing their national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) on time. She announced publications on: best practices and lessons learned; step-by-step guide for implementing NAPAs; and steps to access the fund.

Pa Ousman Jarju, Chair of the LDC Group, acknowledged the work done by LEG, the GEF and other donors during a decade of collaboration. He stressed the need for further resources, and congratulated LDC on their NAPA preparations. Bonizella Biagini, GEF, announced that over the last few days, due to further contributions, the LDC Fund has exceeded the half-a-billion dollar mark, and mentioned accessing the fund has accelerated exponentially since 2008.

Pradeep Kurukulasuriya, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), expressed his gratitude to the LEG for fast-tracking the process of funding and assisting LDCs. He emphasized UNDP's aim to place NAPA process as a high priority. Ermira Fida, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), stressed UNEP's role in supporting countries to reach NAPA priorities; and implementing ecosystem-based adaptation, combined with interventions of hard infrastructure.

Nadine Azzu, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), reflected on the spirit of collaboration between the funding agencies, and recognized LDC needs for assistance in achieving resilience against climate change and food security.

During discussions, the panel answered questions on: the speed of the process; selection of the GEF implementing agencies; low fund absorption; low capacity building for local project developers; integration of development activities into adaptation actions; and lack of ecosystem-based adaptation guidance.



Pepetua Latasi, Chair of the LDC expert group (LEG), congratulated the LDC work programme on its ten-year anniversary.

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Briefing on Rio+20 Preparations

Organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) and the Brazilian Government

Moderator Nikhil Seth, UNCSD, welcomed the Prime Minister of Ethiopia to the meeting, opening discussions on the upcoming Rio+20 Conference.

Sha Zukang, DESA Under-Secretary-General and the UNCSD Secretary General, reflected on submissions to the compilation text including: combating poverty; advancing food security and sustainable agriculture; improving energy access; developing sustainable cities; managing oceans; and improving resilience and disaster preparedness; protecting forests, mountains; improving land management and sanitation. He stressed the integration of economic, social and environmental pillars, requiring energizing implementation.

André Corrêa do Lago, Brazil, credited Rio conventions for production of knowledge and science on climate change, heralding the Rio+20 Conference as once in a generation opportunity to address long-term issues. He acknowledged the essential role that civil society plays in such negotiations.

Dorah Nteo, Chief Director of Coordination and Information Management, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa, related challenges from hosting the World Summit on Sustainable Development, such as: agreement on nature and structure of outcome; methods for consultation with member countries; implementation of envisaged outcomes; and importance of pre-summit diplomacy.

José Solla, Deputy National Secretary of the Brazilian Organizing Committee, Brazil, relayed updates from the logistical planning for RIO+20, underscoring commitment to hosting a green event, with accessibility and connectivity.



Sha Zukang, DESA Under-Secretary-General and the UNCSD Secretary General, said that any development agenda must be of sustainable nature.

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Climate-Smart Agriculture Africa: A Call to Action

Organized by the Organized by the African Union, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, South Africa and the World Bank

Andrew Steer, World Bank, presented the policy brief “Climate-Smart Agriculture Africa: A Call to Action”, and that food security, poverty and climate change are closely linked.

Tina Joemat-Pettersson, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, South Africa, highlighted the importance of placing climate-smart agriculture in COP 17 Agenda. She noted the need to implement the action plan and take advantage of climate-smart agriculture benefits for mitigation, adaptation and food security.

Kofi Annan, Chairman, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, talked about the importance of sustainable agriculture. He said that the current financial turmoil and social pressures must not be used as an excuse to delay progress on climate change negotiations. Annan urged stakeholders to continue working after COP 17, based on common but differentiated responsibilities, to: meet the agreed target to limit global warming; promote technology transfer for mitigation and adaptation; and deliver the developed countries’ commitment for the Green Climate Fund.

Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, noted that 70% of Africans are farmers, and said that even achieving the global target of limiting emissions below 2 degree Celsius will not reduce the negative impacts of climate change on African agriculture. He underscored that climate resilient agriculture must start protecting water resources and soil degradation.

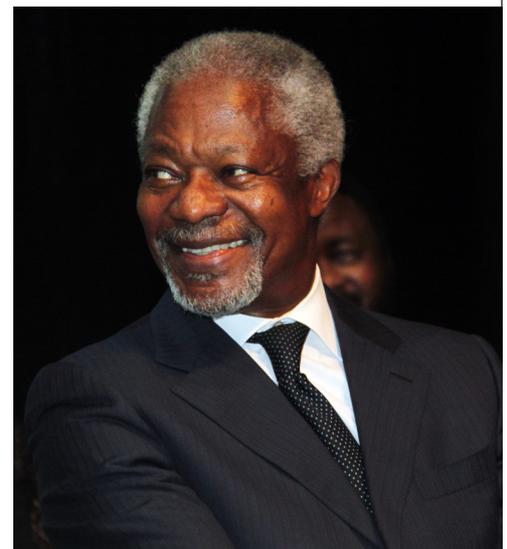
Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, underscored that Africa is the most vulnerable continent regarding climate change impacts. He noted the importance of water, and urged that Rio+20 focus on water management issues.

Sri Mulyani Indrawati, Managing Director of the World Bank, said that improving Africa performance is the most powerful tool to reduce world poverty and hunger. She urged continued efforts to invest in agriculture and rural development. She stated that climate-smart techniques will increase food production and make agriculture more resilient for climate change while contributing to mitigation.

Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa, said climate-smart agriculture seeks to enhance productivity and reduce vulnerability to climate change with techniques such as: conservation, crop rotation, agroforestry, water management, and innovative practices such as improved weather forecasting. He noted that despite recent economic growth in many countries in the region, poverty continues to be an overwhelming challenge due to lack of: safe drinking water; sanitation; irrigation for crops; and access to energy.



Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa, said climate-smart agriculture seeks to enhance productivity by enhancing resilience in the sector.



Kofi Annan, Chairman, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, remembered that “we cannot bend the wind, but we can bend the sail.”

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Panelists discussed the issue of better management of natural resources as tool which will make agriculture more productive.