

A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the Fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Fifth Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP 15 and COP/MOP 5)

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Events convened on Thursday, 17 December 2009

Investing in Women's Leadership for Climate Solutions

Presented by the UNDP, Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA), Denmark and Finland



President Tarja Halonen, Finland, highlighted that funding from Finland helped to enable the participation of over 20 women country delegates from LDCs at the Copenhagen climate change negotiations.

Winnie Byanyima, UNDP, said climate change will magnify existing inequalities, of which gender inequalities are among the most pervasive. Arguing that money is fundamental to addressing climate change, she stated that public- and market-driven mechanisms must reach the world's poorest people.

Christopher Neyor, Liberia, stressed that gender mainstreaming in the climate negotiations is essential for a just and fair treaty. He outlined Liberia's efforts to invest in training to strengthen women's leadership, and highlighted that Liberia had launched its National Action Plan on women, peace and security on International Women's Day in 2009.

Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives, US, said she made climate change the flagship issue of her leadership as Speaker of the House because of its links to security, health and economics, and because it is a moral imperative. She highlighted the US' conditional pledge, announced earlier in the day, to help raise \$US100 billion annually by 2020 to help developing countries cope with climate change.

Katherine Sierra, World Bank, highlighted the "tremendous" financing opportunities that exist to simultaneously address climate change and improve women's lives, and noted the importance of "good analytics" on the gender dimension of climate change and capacity building. She outlined numerous sources of climate financing, including for clean stoves, and opportunities to scale up financing. Ana Lucy Bengochea, Director of El Comite, Honduras, explained that extreme events impact women most and are becoming more severe and frequent in her country. She highlighted various community organization responses, including the establishment of a climate resilience fund.

Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for Development Cooperation, Denmark, introduced the "MDG3 Global Call to Action," a commitment by governments to make gender equality and women's empowerment a key issue. She presented a "Call to Action" torch to President Tarja Halonen of Finland. Senator Loren Legarda, the Philippines, said the Philippines are the first member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to adopt a national Climate Change Act. She suggested that the Inter-Parliamentary Union adopt climate change legislation that enables countries to address climate change regardless of the outcome in Copenhagen.

President Tarja Halonen, Finland, stressed the need for both a legally-binding agreement that includes gender aspects, and subsequent on-the-ground implementation. She said pledged Finland's support in integrating a gender perspective into its National Adaptation Programmes of Action and to encourage participation of women in climate negotiations through a specific women delegates' fund.

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Green Economy: Implementing A New Climate Deal

Presented by UNEP and ILO

The event set out country experiences in linking the green economy to climate actions. Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, pointed out that failure in Copenhagen will, among other things, negatively impact investments in clean technology.

Sachiko Yamamoto, ILO Regional Director Asia-Pacific, on behalf of Juan Somavía, Director General, ILO, set out the UNEP-led Green Economy Initiative, which is providing evidence that green investment can speed up economic recovery by creating green jobs. She also outlined the ILO's Global Justice Pact, which calls for a shift to a low-carbon economy by promoting investment in job-intensive sectors. Carlos Minc, Minister of Environment, Brazil, outlined the "Wind Charter," which provides tax breaks for wind power production. He also highlighted no-till agriculture, investments in production chains for forest product harvesting activities, such as rubber production, and a "green steel" programme.

Jose Endundo Bononge, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Tourism, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), explained that the DRC is considering REDD as a mechanism to stimulate the economy while ensuring climate change mitigation and the conservation of biodiversity. Noting the vulnerability of mountain areas to climate change, Deepak Bohara, Minister of Forest and Soil Conservation, Nepal, explained that the protection and restoration of mountain ecosystems contributes to livelihood improvements. Mr. Kim Chan-woo, Director General, Ministry of the Environment, Republic of Korea, outlined the South Korean Green New Deal, which he said is contingent on leadership, a concrete plan and effective implementation based on regulation and finance.

Participants discussed: the International Monetary Fund's role in promoting a green economy; "greenwash"; and an ILO report called "Green Policies and Jobs: a Double Dividend."



Sachiko Yamamoto, ILO Regional Director Asia-Pacific, outlined the UNEP-led Green Economy Initiative and the ILO's Global Justice Pact, describing them as "drivers of a green economy."

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World Energy Outlook 2009

Presented by the International Energy Agency

This event discussed results from the World Energy Outlook 2009 (WEO 2009) report. Angel Torres, Spain, said his country's commitment to low-carbon growth ensures that measures to mitigate the global economic crisis will simultaneously support green growth. He described how Spain has reduced its energy intensity and become a leader in the renewable energy sector.

Lykke Friis, Minister for Climate and Energy, Denmark, highlighted important messages from the WEO 2009 report, including that "time is money" and temperature cannot be allowed to rise more than 2°C. Stressing the linkages between climate change and energy security, Nobuo Tanaka, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, presented the WEO 2009 report. He highlighted various key findings, including that: 1.3 billion people will still be without energy in 2030; and that, under a 450ppm scenario, total demand for fossil fuels will peak in 2050.

Gro Harlem Brundtland, UN Special Envoy on Climate Change, said the WEO 2009 report forces people to understand the dimensions of the future energy state of affairs, and thus highlights the urgency of the situation. Ottmar Endenhofer, Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group III, warned against the business-as-usual increase in CO₂ that is causing dangerous climate change. He urged the development of a portfolio of mitigation activities, including investing in energy efficiency.

Rick Duke, US, noted recent announcements, including those regarding: the technology action plans released by the Major Economies Forum; and Secretary Chu's intention to host a Clean Energy Ministerial meeting in 2010.

Participants discussed, among other things, whether a 350 ppm target is achievable, and country-specific versus per capita emission totals.



Nobuo Tanaka, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, stressed that tackling climate change requires a massive decarbonization of the energy system.

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Climate Finance: Challenges and Opportunities for Developing Countries

Presented by the UNFCCC

Ministers and representatives from countries involved in a UNFCCC project, entitled National, Economic, Environment and Development Study (NEEDS) for Climate Change, participated in a panel.

Yvo de Boer, UNFCCC, highlighted the need for immediate “quick start” funds between 2010-2012, and for increased public funding, complemented by private finance, to achieve the long-term goals of the UNFCCC. Introducing the NEEDS project, he said it addressed two questions: the scale of financing needed in key sectors in developing countries for adaptation and mitigation, and whether adequate institutional structures are in place to cope with “additional and scaled-up” funding under the Convention.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Philippines, emphasized the disproportionate vulnerability of her country, noting that a UN study placed it in the list of the 12 countries at greatest risk from climate change. She described the sensitivity of the Philippines to tropical cyclones and other climate hazards given its geographic, geophysical and socioeconomic conditions.

Country delegates then offered national perspectives. Indonesia highlighted his country’s plan to reduce GHG emissions by 26% by 2020 compared to a business-as-usual scenario, or by 41% if they receive additional assistance. He said Indonesia is establishing a national council on climate change to coordinate mitigation action.

Lebanon said his country plans to focus on the power generation sector, including wind energy, to mitigate climate change. He said this focus could lead to emission reductions of 4% by 2020 and 13% by 2050. On adaptation, he explained that Lebanon has multiple micro-climates and that lessons learned in the agriculture sector can be shared with African, European and Mediterranean countries.

Pakistan described the potential of the “trillion dollar” global carbon market to assist his country’s transition to a low-carbon development path, identifying opportunities in solar and microhydro power, forestry and REDD. He called climate change a “risk multiplier,” noting its impact on food, energy and economic security.

Highlighting reductions in deforestation, a carbon tax and national payments for ecosystem services, Costa Rica noted his country’s goal of carbon neutrality by 2021 and outlined sectoral approaches that could be adopted to further reduce emissions. He stated that 90% of Costa Rica’s power comes from renewable sources and emphasized the need for continued renewable energy investment to maintain this level.

The Philippines noted that her country spends between 0.9-1.9% of its budget on climate-related expenditures. She stressed that the Philippines is not “begging” for money but rather is admitting that their own financial resources are insufficient to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Ghana highlighted mitigation potentials in its energy, forestry and transport sectors, and noted the need for adaptation in the agriculture sector and in relation to health and coastal zones.

Egypt said his country established a national committee for climate change in 2007, which has conducted pilot projects related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. He stressed the need for a climate change research center to deepen knowledge on climate change and how to address it.



Calling for “robust financial mechanisms” to meet costs of adaptation for developing countries, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, President of the Philippines, applauded US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton’s announcement that the US will contribute to global efforts to mobilize US\$100 billion per year by 2020 to address such climate needs.

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Yvo de Boer, UNFCCC, encouraged debate on how climate finance can be used as an effective tool for developing countries to respond to climate change.

The World Health Organization (WHO) - Protecting Health from Climate Change

Presented by WHO

Franklin Apfel, World Health Communication Associates, opened the session, noting that it would discuss the human health dimensions of climate change.

Maria Neira, WHO, stated that despite some climate change-related “inconvenient truths” for human health, including the large numbers of deaths from malaria, malnutrition and extreme weather events, there are also “convenient opportunities,” namely that: linking climate change and health solutions can be simple; cost-effective interventions against all climate-sensitive health impacts exist; and cutting carbon can bring direct health benefits.

Stating that the health sector can take a leadership role on climate change issues, Abdul Bari Abdulla, Maldives, discussed potential GHG emission reductions in the health sector. Guilherme Franco Netto, Brazil, highlighted a national working plan in his country that focuses on, among others, how to reduce: social vulnerabilities; vector-borne disease; disease from pollution; and injuries related to disasters.

Sir Andrew Haines, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK, highlighted recent research that identifies opportunities for improving public health across various sectors, including in food and agriculture, electricity generation and urban transport. He stressed that public health benefits can help to offset the costs of GHG mitigation.

Gatoloifaana Amataga Alesana-Gidlow, Minister of Health, Samoa, discussed various climate change impacts specific to Samoa and other small island states. She highlighted that incidences of vector-borne diseases, such as dengue fever, are likely to increase with climate change and that new diseases, such as malaria, are expected to affect Samoa.

Jochen Flasbarth, Federal Ministry of the Environment, Germany, stressed the need to raise awareness about health-climate linkages, not only in the general public but also among politicians. He highlighted that adaptation and health must be addressed through a systematic approach and noted the importance of cooperation among various ministries on this issue.

Amb. Cristina Barrios, Spain, underscored that there are many dramatic interactions between climate change and human health. She referenced the results of a recent meeting in her country that adopted a research plan to study, among other things: the long-term impacts of climate change, such as declines in freshwater, on health; how to improve the effectiveness of short-term interventions; and the health impacts of policies in non-health sectors, such as the impact of biofuel production on food security.

A representative from UNAIDS, reflected some lessons learned from his organization’s work on addressing the AIDS epidemic, which he said could be useful to the current the health-climate discussions. He stressed the importance of: early action; joint programming across agencies; and the “empowerment” of civil society in finding solutions.

Participants asked questions throughout the event on topics including: the role of health in the UNFCCC negotiations; next steps for implementing health-related climate policies; how civil society can participate in negotiations and access data; and the types of activities that WHO and governments should take on to address the issues discussed by the presenters.



Maria Neira, WHO, highlighted various examples of synergies between health and climate change policies, providing the example that providing sustainable urban transport could cut heart disease by 10-25% in developing countries.

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Gatoloifaana Amataga Alesana-Gidlow, Minister of Health, Samoa, emphasized that health is identified as a priority area in her country’s NAPA.