

Collective action must be at heart of climate change response – Ban Ki-moon



21 September 2009 – On the eve of the largest-ever gathering of world leaders on the issue of climate change, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today underscored the urgent need for collective action to save the planet.

Kicking off the first-ever “Climate Week NY°C,” Mr. Ban **called** on civil society, faith groups, businesses and governments to join forces to combat climate change.

“Your collective efforts are vital for generating greater public awareness on climate change,” he said at the event also attended by former United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Tomorrow's **summit**, which is expected to be attended by some 100 heads of State and government, seeks to mobilize political momentum to “accelerate the pace of negotiations and help strengthen the ambition of what is on offer,” said the Secretary-General.

United States President Barack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao are among the world leaders who will address the opening session of the gathering tomorrow.

It will also feature a UN Leadership Forum Luncheon – to be addressed by former US Vice-President and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Al Gore – which will mark the first time that global political leaders, as well as top business and civil society officials, will meet on such a large scale at the UN.

While not a negotiating session, the summit will allow world leaders to engage in direct discussions in small roundtable discussions, each co-chaired by a leader from a developing and developed country.

The Secretary-General today also reiterated his call for governments to 'seal the deal' on an ambitious new agreement to curb greenhouse gas emissions this December in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The deal reached in the Danish capital later this year would go into effect when the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol ends in 2012.

“A climate agreement will not just safeguard the environment,” Mr. Ban, who visited the Arctic ice rim where he saw first-hand the devastating effects of climate change on the

glaciers, emphasized. "It can help to fundamentally shift our world toward a greener economy."

But any new agreement, he said in **remarks** to the Alliance of Small Island Developing States, must "include a comprehensive, robust adaptation package. This is critical."

Although these nations are renowned for their beauty, many are unaware of their vulnerability to natural hazards, the Secretary-General noted.

"You are among those States most exposed to inevitable climate impacts such as rising sea levels, more severe storms, floods and extreme weather," he said. "Your vulnerability is acute."

In some cases, he pointed out, these nations' very existence is at risk, voicing his support for their plea for urgent global action.

"A deal for the climate must also be a deal for development," Mr. Ban underscored, calling for greater attention to be paid to reducing disaster risks and boost the resilience of ecosystems.

Also essential are effective action on both the adaptation and mitigation front to raise millions of people out of poverty's clutches, he said.

"Now more than ever," the Secretary-General said, "we need head of State leadership if the world is to cross the finish line in Copenhagen" and reach an "equitable, effective and comprehensive global solution."

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