

?

Major step taken toward universal climate change pact as UN climate talks end

Warsaw, Poland (PANA) - The two-week UN Climate Change Conference ended Saturday in Warsaw, Poland, with a major step taken towards a universal climate agreement to be signed in 2015.

President of the 19th Conference of Parties (COP 19) Marcin Korolec of Poland said the conference had set a pathway for governments to work on a draft text of the agreement, which will be tabled at the next UN Climate Change Conference in Peru, Lima.

"This is an essential step to reach a final agreement in Paris in 2015," Korolec said at the end of the talks that dragged on beyond the Friday conclusion date.

According to a statement issued by the UN Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC), in the context of 2015, countries decided to initiate or intensify domestic preparation for their intended national contributions towards that agreement, which will come into force from 2020.

Parties ready to do this will submit clear and transparent plans well in advance of COP 21, in Paris, and by the first quarter of 2015.

Countries also resolved to close the pre-2020 ambition gap by intensifying technical work and more frequent engagement of Ministers.

The conference also decided to establish an international mechanism to provide most vulnerable populations with better protection against loss and damage caused by extreme weather events and slow onset events such as rising sea levels, the UNFCCC statement said.

Detailed work on the so-called "Warsaw international mechanism for loss and damage" will begin next year.

"We have seen essential progress. But let us again be clear that we are witnessing ever more frequent, extreme weather events, and the poor and vulnerable are already paying the price," Christiana Figueres, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, said.

"Now governments, and especially developed nations, must go back to do their homework so they can put their plans on the table ahead of the Paris conference," she said.

Governments also provided more clarity on mobilising finance to support developing country actions to curb emissions and adapt to climate change.

This includes requesting developed countries to prepare biennial submissions on their updated strategies and approaches for scaling up finance between 2014 and 2020.

The Warsaw meeting also resulted in concrete announcements of forthcoming contributions of public climate finance to support developing nation action, including from Norway, the UK, EU, US, Republic of Korea, Japan, Sweden, Germany and Finland.

The Warsaw Framework for REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) is backed by pledges of US\$280 million financing from the US, Norway and the UK.

Developed countries, including Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, have also paid or pledged over US\$100 million to add to the Adaptation Fund, which has now started to fund national projects.

But Martin Kaiser, head of Delegation for Greenpeace International, charged that neither the industrialised countries nor the big developing nations were willing to move forward in offering concrete measures to reduce their emissions, or even agree on a concrete date for doing so.

"Apart from a pittance for the adaptation fund, the rich countries did not pledge any money to supporting developing countries in their efforts to tackle climate change and to build up climate friendly economies," Kaiser said at the end of the talks.

"It is irresponsible of the governments of Poland, US, China, India and EU to pretend to act against global warming and catastrophic climate change while agreeing on baby steps at COP19," he added.

He said a global treaty in Paris won't be possible without a systemic paradigm shift away from fossil fuels and nuclear power, and towards renewable energy in the EU, the US, China and India.

-0- PANA MM/SEG 24Nov2013

2013-11-24 19:25:45