

Media Briefing



Friends of the Earth International

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**Friends of
the Earth
International**

CLIMATE TALKS – NAIROBI

**United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference)
Monday 6 – Friday 17 November 2006**

Nairobi, Kenya

Governments from 190 countries will meet in Nairobi, Kenya on the 6th November for the UN climate negotiations to shape the future of an international climate agreement. UK Environment Secretary David Miliband will be attending and Britain is being urged to take a leadership role.

The talks are crucial in taking forward the international agenda on tackling climate change – with scientists agreed that urgent action is needed if we are to avoid catastrophic climate change. Many experts warn that we have just 10 years to stabilise the climate, and an international agreement on the way forward is essential if this is to be achieved.

A 700 page report by Sir Nicholas Stern on the economics of climate change, released in October, shows that governments can afford to act – and must do so urgently – to avoid disastrous economic costs. The report says that measures to tackle climate change will have economic benefits and that an investment of just one per cent in the global economy will avoid costs of 10 per cent.

Friends of the Earth International Climate Campaigner Catherine Pearce said:

“The threat is overwhelming. The urgent need for action cannot be ignored. The talks in Nairobi must lead the international community to the tough emission cuts needed – and these must be firmly agreed by 2008. The momentum we saw in Montreal last year demonstrates the desire for action, but Ministers arriving in Nairobi must speed up this process urgently.

“We have a strong international framework already in place. We must build on Kyoto and strengthen it, with all developed countries committing to deeper cuts after 2012, and some of the bigger developing countries also joining the process. There must also be a greater commitment to the needs of the most vulnerable countries which are already bearing the brunt of climate change.”

A Summary

COP 12 (the 12th Conference of the Parties to the UN Climate Change Convention) brings together representatives from all countries signed up to the Kyoto Protocol, the international treaty to reduce

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greenhouse gas emissions. These countries need to build on the successful UN discussions in

Montreal last year, and begin shaping an agreement on greenhouse gas emissions cuts for the second phase of the Kyoto Protocol starting in 2013.

Friends of the Earth International is calling on governments to define a clear work programme for the post 2012 negotiations while in Nairobi. This must address all aspects of the Montreal Action Plan agreed last year.

Countries are committed, under the terms of the Kyoto Protocol, to carry out a rigorous review of the Kyoto Protocol – and this process should begin in Nairobi. On-going negotiations must also take place on the future action of industrialised countries, as set out in article 3.9 of the Kyoto Protocol. These negotiations should be given a clear end date of 2008.

Additional agreements are also urgently required to resolve arrangements for the Adaptation Fund which finances projects on the ground in developing countries to help manage the impacts of climate change. In addition, governments of rich countries must increase funding for adaptation in less developed countries.

This briefing looks at the background to the talks, the context of climate change in Africa, items on the agenda and at Friends of the Earth International's involvement at the talks.

Background

Ministers will meet in Nairobi against a backdrop of growing calls for action on climate change. The 10 hottest years on record have all occurred since 1991 and 2005 was the warmest year in the northern hemisphere. British Prime Minister Tony Blair recently wrote to EU leaders warning that "we have a window of only 10-15 years to take the steps we need to avoid crossing catastrophic tipping points." One of America's top scientists, Professor John Holdren and President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science recently claimed that the world had already entered a state of dangerous climate change.

New research published by the British Met Office Hadley Centre in October this year suggested that an additional quarter of the Earth's land surface could be affected by drought by the end of this century.

The Stern Review – an independent review of the economics of climate change commissioned by the UK Government, has warned that a failure to act to tackle climate change would cost the global economy £1.3 trillion or 20 per cent of GDP. Each tonne of CO2 now emitted has a cost of \$85 – but CO2 can be cut at a cost of just \$25 a tonne.

The current commitments under the Kyoto Protocol are based on modest targets for industrialised countries. But scientists and models demonstrate that these modest targets will not prevent dangerous climate change. Strengthening climate science confirms that a 2 degree celsius threshold for climate change should be the guide for policy makers in order to reduce the risk of irreversible and catastrophic damage, especially in the poorest countries. The two degree celsius limit in average global temperatures has been EU policy since 1996. Evidence suggests if we are to keep levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere at a safe level (a level most scientists put at well below 450ppmv) countries will need to adopt stronger agreements to cut their greenhouse gas emissions,

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with action in developed countries in the order of 35 per cent by 2020 and 80-90 per cent by 2050.

How the climate is changing in Africa

The meeting takes place in Kenya, and is the first of its kind to take place in sub-Saharan Africa. The event will take place with a backdrop of evidence on how human induced climate change is overwhelming Africa. This is the continent most vulnerable of all to the negative affects of climate change, and the one that faces the greatest challenges to adapt.

The Kenyan 'Green Belt Movement' recently stated that Africa's two highest and most symbolic mountains, Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya will lose their ice cover within 25 to 50 years if emissions are not cut. Studies suggest that temperature rises of just 2-3 degrees will see crop yields in Africa fall by as much as 30 to 40 per cent. Small scale farming provides most of the food produced in Africa, as well as employment for 70 per cent of working people.

A coalition of the UK's leading development and environment groups last month launched an updated *Africa – Up in Smoke 2* report, based on the latest available scientific research and evidence from those living on the front line of climate change.

It shows that climate change is already having serious impacts on peoples' lives across Africa – and is set to get much worse unless urgent action is taken. While local conditions vary, across sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, 33 per cent of people are under-nourished, compared with 17 per cent of people in all developing countries. This rises to 55 per cent in Central Africa. The average number of food emergencies in Africa per year almost tripled since the mid 1980s. Climate change poses a new and unprecedented threat to food security. An initial report on Africa was launched in July 2005 in the run up to the G8 Summit in Gleneagles.

Friends of the Earth International in Nairobi

Friends of the Earth International will be in Nairobi actively following the negotiations and lobbying for urgent action and tough targets from governments. Working as part of the Climate Action Network, which includes groups from the South, we will be working to show how climate change is an urgent issue that is already considerably afflicting people in many parts of the world.

The Friends of the Earth Europe Climate Deal

Friends of the Earth will also be distributing copies of Friends of the Earth Europe's Climate Deal at the Nairobi talks. The Deal represents an agreement made between citizens and political leaders in Europe. This followed an awareness raising campaign in Europe during the summer of 2006, when Friends of the Earth Europe campaigners collected thousands of "Citizens Deals against Climate Change". People from all over Europe promised to adopt more climate friendly behaviour; in counterpart they expect their government to do the same on the policy level.

The Climate Deal booklets were presented to each of the 25 European Environment Ministers at a recent European Union Council meeting in Luxembourg.

Demonstration against climate change, 11 November, Nairobi

A demonstration against climate change will take place in Nairobi, following international demonstrations in major cities all around the world on the previous Saturday 4 November. Some 5,000 people are expected to participate. More information on both demonstration days is available

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from <http://www.globalclimatecampaign.org/>

Learning lessons of community resilience: successes and barriers to reducing vulnerability Friends of the Earth International Official side event

Climate change requires building resilience in local communities to reduce vulnerability to impacts, capturing the attention from the multi-lateral level to the grass roots. This side event will explore a range of actions taken at community level and the role of financial institutions. With Nobel Peace Prize Winner Wangari Maathai from the Kenyan 'Green Belt Movement'.

Wednesday 15 November, 11:15 to 12:45

African Blackwood Tree, Gigiri

BACKGROUND TO THE UN NEGOTIATIONS

The Kyoto Protocol, established in 1997, came into force in February 2005. The Protocol was born from and firmly embedded in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, drafted and adopted in 1992. The Convention sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change. It recognises that the climate is a shared global resource. Its stability can be affected by industrial and other emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

Thirty six countries are currently bound by the Protocol, committing to mandatory targets for the period 2008-12, when the first commitment period ends. There is wide agreement that this first round of commitments will not save the climate from catastrophic change but is a base to build on for the future.

Issues on the Agenda

The international climate negotiations take place from 6- 17 November. Joint meetings of the Conference of the Parties and Meeting of the Parties will be convened and the high level segment from 15-17 November, will be attended by Ministers from around the world.

Critical items include discussions on the shape of the international climate regime after 2012, and the detail of the Montreal Action Plan. Articles 3.9 and 9 of the Protocol require that countries begin in 2005 and 2006 to both review and amend the Protocol in preparation for the second commitment period in 2013.

Article 3.9 which refers to future commitments by the industrialised countries was raised in Montreal last year and an Ad Hoc Working Group (AWG) established. This group has met once already in Bonn in Germany in May during official UN meetings and a list of issues to be discussed were identified. An 'In Session' Workshop will be held during the second meeting of the AWG in Nairobi with presentations from Parties and external bodies, including the EU and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the 4th Assessment Report due out next year.

Under Article 9 a wider review of the Protocol is requested at the second Meeting of the Parties. This is an important opportunity for a rigorous review of the Protocol, in order to ensure its future effectiveness, equitable basis and expansion beyond 2012.

The third process, the "Dialogue on Long Term Cooperative Action", a non-binding two-year dialogue

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under the Convention “to analyse strategic approaches for long-term cooperative action to address climate change” will continue. This will take place 15-16 November and will discuss advancing development goals in a sustainable way and realising the full potential of market-based opportunities.

Discussions on reducing emissions from deforestation in developing countries, an issue initially raised by Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica in Montreal, will be continued. A number of additional proposals have recently been presented. Agreement on implementation of such an arrangement is needed by COP13 in 2007.

Friends of the Earth International is calling on governments arriving in Nairobi to set out a clear work programme for the post 2012 negotiations. These negotiations must be completed by the end of 2008 in order for the first commitment period to be immediately followed by the second. Both negotiating tracks under Article 3.9 and 9 under the Protocol are complementary and intimately interconnected. Achievement of a post 2012 regime relies on success being achieved in both fora.

Additional agreements are also urgently required to resolve operational arrangements for the Adaptation Fund which finances concrete adaptation projects in developing countries. The funds are raised via a levy on credits that are generated from projects under the Clean Development Mechanism. Parties have yet to agree under which institution the Fund should sit.

Future Action

Recognising the issue of equity, and the principle of “differentiated but common responsibilities”, it is essential that Annex I countries act first in making the deepest cuts and demonstrate further leadership on the issue of climate change, by setting new binding targets that sharply reduce their emissions beyond 2012.

Friends of the Earth urges governments to make real progress on deepening industrialised country commitments in the post 2012 regime which will help to secure the protection of this planet against the dangers of climate change.

A more dynamic framework will be required to reflect the range of commitments and actions beyond the current Annex I and non Annex I. We believe the Kyoto Protocol can be expanded and strengthened post 2012 to take on this capacity.

The negotiations for the future framework should aim towards flexibility, innovation and integration of the range of capacities to ensure all needs (including sustainable development) are recognised and should also include greater quantified contributions from larger developing countries. This would be a further expansion of the ‘common but differentiated responsibilities’, principle on which the current regime is based.

The international Climate Action Network has set forth a clear proposal for the post 2012 regime including more ambitious absolute and binding reduction targets for the industrialised ‘Annex I’ countries; contributions from rapidly developing, non Annex I countries to advance their development goals in a sustainable manner, largely funded by the industrialised world; and increased adaptation measures for the most vulnerable countries and communities.

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