

BANGKOK UN CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS MAKES PROGRESS...BUT DECISIONS ON FINANCING AND MID-TERM TARGETS REMAIN OUTSTANDING – UNFCCC REPORT

Frederick Baffour Opoku
Accra, Ghana

The penultimate negotiating session before the historic UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December wrapped up Friday October 9 in the Thai capital, Bangkok with progress made on what constitutes the “bricks and mortar of the Copenhagen agreed outcome”, reports the United Nations Convention framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

However, there is still a continued lack of clarity on key deliberations to make a successful international climate deal workable, says a UNFCCC release, after the meeting which commenced on September 28.

Parties are reported to have made progress on the issue of adaptation, technology transfer, and capacity building. They also reached agreement on technical issues such as forest and land issues, how to assess the global warming potential of new greenhouse gases and the number of options for strengthening the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

Parties however made little progress on the issue of mid-term emission reduction targets for industrialized countries. Also, clarity is lacking on the issue of finance that developing countries need to limit their emissions growth and adapt to the enviable effects of climate change.

“A will has emerged in Bangkok to build the architecture to rapidly implement climate action”, an obviously optimistic Yvo de Boer, UNFCCC Executive Secretary is reported to have said in the release. But, he is quick in admitting that significant difference remains.

“In December, citizens every where in the world will have a right to learn exactly what their governments will do to prevent dangerous climate change. It is time now to step back from self interest and let the common interest remain”, the executive secretary is quoted further.

Yvo de Boer is of the view that “a good example with regard to what industrialized countries can do to increase the level of their ambition in the context of an international agreement in Copenhagen is the - 40 percent emissions reduction target announced by Norway October 9”.

The negotiations in Thailand will be followed by five days of pre-Copenhagen negotiations in Barcelona from November 2 to 6, before the December event.

Yvo de Boer observes that negotiators have barely three weeks back in their capitals to receive guidance from their political leaders to complete their work. He therefore advocates for bold leadership to open the road block along the essentials of targets and finance that the negotiators can complete their journey.

Heads of state and governments meeting at the special UN climate change summit convened by UN Secretary General, Ban ki – moon in New York on September 23, identified five potentially essential issues to deliver a comprehensive, effective Copenhagen agreement namely, adaptation action, Reducing Emission from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REED) for developing countries, technology, capacity building and institutional arrangements for finance.