

High level call to fulfil USD 100 billion a year promise for climate actions

Marrakech, 16 Nov (Hilary Chiew and Zhenyan Zhu) – Developed country Parties' fulfilment of the provision of USD 100 billion annually by 2020 was stressed by all the guests of honour at the opening of the traditional high-level segment of the two-week United Nations climate talks.

Officiating the 3-day segment on 15 Nov at the on-going 22nd session of the Conference of the Parties (COP22) to the UN Convention on climate Change, **His Majesty King Muhammad VI of Morocco** urged all Parties to translate their commitment of solidarity in the fight against climate change into action and called upon advanced developed countries to honour their commitment in mobilising USD100 billion by 2020.

French President Francoise Hollande assured “those hesitating” that most developed countries will do their utmost to mobilise the USD 100 billion by 2020 and that France will contribute USD 5 billion per year by 2020 including USD 1 billion for adaptation.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon said the UN must continue to advance the moral case and called on developed countries to mobilise the promised USD 100 billion while the **UN General Assembly President Peter Thomson** emphasised that provision of finance was an important milestone in the Paris Agreement, and it is crucial that developed countries scale up their commitment.

In light of the recent United States election which will see climate sceptic, the Republican president-elect Donald Trump, occupying the White House soon, Hollande said:

“The United States, the second largest greenhouse gas emitter, must respect the commitment it has undertaken. France can assure you, it will lead this dialogue with the US and its president in openness and respect but with demand and determination on

behalf of the 100 states that had ratified the Paris Agreement.”

As of 15 November, 110 Parties have ratified the Paris Agreement, which entered into force on 4 November, ahead of COP 22 that began on 7 November.

The high-level segment opening ceremony was preceded by the opening of the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 1). Shortly after declaring the CMA 1 open, **COP President Salaheddein Mezouar**, who is also the Foreign Minister of Morocco, adjourned the meeting to make way for the high-level segment.

Earlier King Muhammad VI had welcomed more than 100 heads of state and government and ministers on the red carpet as they entered the convention centre at Bab Ighli from 11 am.

King Muhammad VI, in his speech, said the whole of mankind is pinning its hope on resolution to the climate crisis and priority must be given to tackle the adverse repercussions of climate change that is growing worse for countries in the South and island states.

He said there are major differences among states and regions, noting that the priorities of advanced nations are not the same as developing countries, and there are major gaps in terms of resources.

“The era of colonisation is over. It is our joint duty to work hand in hand. Developing countries must not be pressured to accept decisions that they cannot comply with ... they do not have the necessary means to implement. Wait-and-see attitude and negligence will lead to dire consequences,” he stressed.

King Muhammad VI urged all Parties “in the name of our shared destiny, ... to work to translate our commitment of solidarity into actions by providing countries in the South especially the least developed

countries and small island countries with urgent finance and technology support to enable them to adapt to climate change.” He called on advanced developed countries to honour their commitment and mobilise USD 100 billion at least by 2020 which is key to the Paris Agreement; and facilitate technology transfer and working on development and research. Non-governmental partners were also called upon to give strong impetus to the Global Climate Action Agenda.

(The Global Climate Action Agenda is the continuation of an initiative launched at COP 20 in Lima, Peru dubbed the Lima-Paris Action Agenda, to promote the involvement of the private sector, particularly businesses, in combating climate change.)

Highlighting Moroccan’s efforts, King Muhammad VI also said the Kingdom spared no effort to increase its contribution towards curbing greenhouse gas emissions as the country is among the first to announce its intended nationally determined contributions (INDCs) and had taken concrete steps to ensure that 52% of energy supply will come from clean sources by 2030.

Ban Ki Moon spoke of the six lessons he learnt from a decade of giving top priority to climate change:

- Multilateral solution works. This is true for the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals and recent achievement on mitigation.
- Heads of State and government must lead.
- Whole societies need to engage. The Global Climate Action Agenda generated collaboration between government, business, financial community and civil society. They demonstrate the power of partnership.
- The United Nations must continue to champion the science. “Current nationally determined contributions will not get us out of the danger zone. The mechanism within the Paris Agreement to continuously raise ambition based on the best available science is critically important. We need to get on a global emission pathway that limits warming this century to well below 2 degrees Celsius and close to 1.5 as possible. This means the global emissions need to peak by 2020 and decline rapidly from then on. I strongly urge all countries to increase the mitigation ambition of their national climate plans by 2018. The private sector must also do much more. And I call for the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies to accelerate the transition to

clean energy.”

- Fund and expand solutions. “We need to better anticipate and absorb climate risks and reshape development to be more resilient. The Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction will advance progress. I have also launched a Climate Resilience Initiative.”
- The United Nations must continue advancing the moral case for action. “I call on developed countries to honour their commitment to mobilize climate finance of US\$100bil by 2020 to help developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate vulnerability.”

Peter Thomson said the speed of the entry into force of the Paris Agreement sends a clear message of collective commitment to the world of the urgent need to act on climate change.

Citing catastrophic climate events in recent time, he said urgent action on climate change must therefore be seen as a moral, environmental, scientific and developmental imperative, guided by ambition, action and equity, noting that transforming the global economy in a manner that drives inclusive economic growth while decoupling it from global emissions is needed.

“The aggregate result of all current global pledges by Parties under the Paris Agreement leaves us an ‘emissions gap’ between what has been pledged and what the scientific community tells us is required to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

“Raised ambition and scaled up mitigation action are therefore needed. Here in Marrakech it is incumbent on the international community to pursue these efforts collectively in accordance with the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities,” he stressed.

Thomson highlighted that the transition to inclusive low-carbon economies will require a scaling-up and mobilizing of finance and that the provision of finance was an important milestone in the Paris Agreement, and it is crucial that developed countries scale up their commitments to mobilize USD 100 billion annually by 2020, in support of developing countries’ climate actions.

“Definition of a clear roadmap to meet this finance target would further strengthen the trust created between Parties in Paris,” he asserted.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa said the day is historic as it is marked by the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Paris Agreement.

“We should celebrate, but we should also reflect on how to now accelerate climate action. At the very centre of our work lies the vital need to make climate action a cornerstone of the transformation to truly sustainable development,” she said, adding that, “This must guide us as we build a low-emission and resilient world. We must strike a balance between the needs of societies and the need for a healthy planet. Finding this harmony will protect the one planet we all share and depend on. It will promote prosperity and the wellbeing of people, especially the most vulnerable.”

Taking the floor as the last speaker of the opening ceremony, **French President Hollande** recalled the memorable Paris COP last year and described the gathering in Marrakech with the entry into force of the Paris Agreement in record time as “historic” and that the agreement is “irreversible”.

“We are moving decisively towards a low carbon model of growth. Today, renewable energy accounts for 90% of new electricity production,” he said.

“France will lead by example by issuing the first sovereign bond next year for investment in the energy transition ... that’s why it is irreversible. The climate emergency did not stop on 12 December (referring to the day of the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015),” he added.

Hollande said he did not come to Marrakech to remind people of Paris but to call for consistency and perseverance.

He recalled that the role played by US President Barack Obama was crucial, particularly in light of decisions taken with China and others.

“The US as the second largest greenhouse gas emitter must respect the commitment they have undertaken. It is not only their duty but it is in the interests as well of Americans affected by climate change because no country can be sheltered (from) impacts of climate change.

“France can assure you that it will lead this dialogue with the US and its (in-coming) President (Donald Trump) in openness and respect but with demand

and determination on behalf of the 100 states that had ratified the Paris Agreement,” he said emphatically.

He said as countries set the goal of limiting temperature rise to 2 degree Celcius, and if possible 1.5 degree Celcius, they need to step up the pace to implement the Paris Agreement faster.

“In 2018, we need to step up pace for the nationally determined contributions. France wants to lead by example and reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2040 and we shall close our coal plants by 2023. I know not all countries are ready for this but France wants to lead and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050,” he declared.

He also said COP 22 must put Africa at the heart of the solution, noting that USD10 billion has been pledged for the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative launched in Paris and that France will provide USD 2 billion over the next five years to the initiative.

Hollande further assured that “those hesitating must know that most developed countries will take commitment and fulfil the USD 100 billion by 2020”, adding that “we must do our utmost to mobilise the funding ... France will contribute USD 5 billion per year by 2020 including USD 1 billion for adaptation.”

He said some people had the idea of “all are done in Paris” but nothing is farther from the truth. It is now, he stressed, that everything starts.

“A promise of hope cannot be betrayed. It must be fulfilled here in Marrakech. We are the guardians of the letter and spirit of the Paris Agreement.

“We must remember what unites us (who are) from different religions, convictions, situations, different stages of development ... what unite us is what we have in common and that simply is our planet,” he concluded.

The high-level segment opening ended with a lively song by local artists accompanied by young children. Following that, dignitaries were invited to a lunch hosted by King Muhammad VI.

It resumed from 5.30pm until past 8pm with national statements by heads of state and government, and will continue on 16 November morning.