

UN Chief Wants Strongest Political Will To Address Climate Change

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By Jamaluddin Muhammad

BANGKOK, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- Against the backdrop of Thailand's worst flood in five decades, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has warned world leaders not to further delay addressing the climate change issue at the forthcoming Durban meeting.

He said the international community should address the issue with the strongest political leadership and commitment during the climate change meeting in Durban on Nov 28.

They also need to mobilise the Green Climate Fund pledged during last year's Cancun meeting, he said, adding that he had been highlighting the issue on behalf of the international community, over the importance of addressing the climate change issue without further delay.

"The minimum, the Durban conference should be able to implement, is what was agreed upon at Cancun last year. That means they should launch this Green Climate Fund," he said during a joint press conference with Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra today.

The Cancun meeting agreed to establish the fund aimed at financing projects, programmes, policies and activities in developing countries, in addressing the climate change issues.

Ban urged the member states to make clear guidelines and deliver their pledges in Copenhagen in 2009 -- US\$30 billion by end of next year for developing countries in their effort to adapt and mitigate the global environmental problem.

The UN chief said there should be a clear guideline and framework to deliver US\$100 billion per annum by 2020, as pledged by world leaders in the Cancun and Copenhagen meetings.

"Mobilising US\$100 billion is a big challenge but it is a global effort. If there is a political will, even in this economic crisis time, I believe we can do it. I am urging the world leaders to address this matter with a sense of urgency," he said.

Apart from the fund, the Cancun meeting, among others, also agreed to cut a maximum temperature rise of two degrees Celcius above pre-industrial levels and consider lowering that level to 1.5 degrees in the near future.

Ban also wanted the Durban meeting to make a clarification on the future of the Kyoto Protocol which expires next year.

The protocol, adopted in 1997, is aimed at fighting global warming and countries commit to a reduction of greenhouse gasses emission by 5.2 per cent from the 1990 level.

The Durban meeting is expected to seek a new international climate agreement, in replacing the Kyoto Protocol.

The UN chief is here on a two-day visit, starting today, in getting first- hand experience of the three-month flood crisis which has inundated one-third of the country, with more than five million people affected and more than 500 lives lost.

The devastating flood caused billions of dollars in losses to the country's economy after most of the economic sectors, including its industry and agriculture, were badly affected.

On the flood crisis, Ban said the UN, through its agencies, had provided technical and logistical support to Thailand.

"I believe the Thai Government and the people will be able to overcome this crisis and rebuild the country," he added. However, he cautioned the government on the possible outbreak of water-borne diseases as some parts of the country were still inundated.

On the lessons learnt by the international community during this crisis, he said the community could not prevent the occurrence of mega disasters such as tsunami and flood.

Nevertheless, it depended on the preparedness of the government in reducing the disaster impacts, added Ban.

He will depart for Bali Thursday to attend the 4th Asean-UN Summit.

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