

Unofficial transcript of the press conference held by Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 15th November 2010.

Thank you, good afternoon to those who are here and to those who are around the globe. Cancún has to be the next essential step on the road to a solution to the climate challenge. At this point, everything I see tells me that there is a deal to be done.

Cancún will be a success, if Parties compromise. They have to balance their expectations so that everyone can carry home a positive achievement while allowing others to do the same.

That's how multilateral agreements are made elsewhere and it is how it has to happen in climate, too.

In Cancún, governments CAN reach a deal to launch action on adaptation, technology transfer, forests and they can create a new fund to house long-term climate financing.

But I'm not going to underestimate the political gaps that still need to be bridged - these focus mostly on how to move forward with emission reductions, deciding what to do about the Kyoto Protocol and how to anchor the many national targets and actions governments have put forward; in particular, the targets of industrialized countries. Governments need to be clear in Cancún on how and when this will happen.

Expectations for Cancún are realistic, but there's still a lot at stake if the world is going to stay below a two degree temperature rise.

A Cancún deal isn't going to solve the whole problem. But it can set a new pace for negotiations, where governments lock in better agreements every year, never ruling out new possibilities or ignoring existing needs for the future.

If climate change is humanity's biggest long-term challenge, it is also our greatest opportunity. It is the sustained and increasingly ambitious long-term response to climate change that will allow a successful adjustment to the other great political, economic and social changes which all countries face.

The world is looking for the right answers - just last weekend, we saw the G20 struggling to find new ways towards balanced growth. So what could be more compelling than the fact that the solutions to climate change not only address the environmental problem, but also offer major opportunities for all nations to achieve sustainable, affordable, equitable and profitable development? But only if we step up action now. It is in no one's interest to delay action. Thank you and I'm happy to take any questions.

Question: I have two questions: one, do you see a discrepancy between national mitigation efforts and goals and the positions that governments are willing to take in the negotiations; and my second question would be do you have the impression that the deep water horizon disaster has had any impact at all in the negotiations?

Christiana: There is actually much hope to be taken from the actions that countries have already taken at a national level. We see an increasing number of countries not only taking their mitigation opportunities very seriously but in fact moving these mitigation intents into national policy in international legalisation. There is of course always a difference between what you do nationally and what you actually commit to internationally so what we're seeing here is at this point is that countries are moving faster forward with their national commitments than they are with the international commitments and partly due of course due to the necessary balance that has to exist at the international level of everyone pulling their weight. So yes there is a discrepancy it is an understandable discrepancy however, it is very clear that countries while they are addressing these issues at a national perspective they also must be able to anchor these pledges and their activities at home, they must be able to anchor them into the international regime in order to have the international regime move

forward.

El Telegrafo: Is there optimism for our planet and what will happen after the summit?

Christiana: There is optimism for the planet precisely because of the issue that I just addressed that is quite evident that countries in increasing number taking this issue seriously and are taking their own domestic steps forward. At the same time I believe that there is optimism at the multilateral level. [The CBD conference in] Nagoya has shown how the multilateral process can actually lead to agreements at that level and one must remember that climate is a global problem and can only have an ultimate global solution. There is not one single country – be it a large or a small country – that is not already directly impacted by climate change and hence all countries need to be a part, and there is growing understanding throughout this year that countries are actually addressing issues in a much more serious manner and have restored a sense of trust with each other.

Question: Can you an example of countries that move faster nationally than internationally?

Christiana: Well I think the most evident example actually is China, that has just completed five years of domestic legislation on climate and is now currently in the design mode for the next five years...its twelfth [five] year plan of economic growth that will include very clear targets for energy efficiency and renewable energy. That will be part of the Chinese legislation and there is no doubt that given the historic performance that China has had on the 11th five-year plan that they have not actually just performed to the level of their target, but they have out-performed and it is well to think they will be able to out-perform again. But it is not just the large countries, it is also the small countries such as Maldives and Costa Rica, two very small countries that have actually already taken a pledge to neutrality and are currently designing their nationally appropriate mitigation actions that are going to help them achieve that neutrality by the second decade.

Question: The Government of Mexico says that it is possible to reach agreements on specific issues such as REDD, technology transfer and capacity-building. What is for you the minimum acceptable agreement that would make the outcome of Cancún a success?

Christiana: Cancún needs to conclude with a balanced set of decisions that will include these that the Mexican government has alluded to. Certainly on adaption, certainly on forestry, certainly on technology cooperation but in order to be a balanced package, the Cancún agreement must also address the mitigation efforts by both industrialized countries as well as those developing countries that have already put mitigation intents on the table. In addition to that, Cancún must also come to some resolution about what the continuation of the Kyoto Protocol is going to be, because that clearly affects the form of the mitigation efforts of countries under the Kyoto Protocol. And finally the Cancún agreement must also in its package include the next steps to be taken by countries with respect to long-term financing. The discussion there is whether a fund will be created in Cancún and then design a process, or whether it would be better to first have a designed process and then the political decision to establish the fund. So it's a sequential issue that's currently being discussed but I think there is overall recognition of the need for a very concrete step to be taken in Cancún with respect to long-term financing.

Question: What do you think: how much time will be needed to have a legally-binding agreement? To fix it?

Christiana: One of the lessons that governments learned from last year in Copenhagen is that it is unrealistic to expect governments to move in one step to a comprehensive, legally-binding agreement and that it is perhaps necessary and more realistic for governments to take the approach that they've taken this year which is to set the foundations of instrumentation, so: what can they actually achieve on the ground? Where can action really be pushed forward? And then use that set of instruments and institutions that will be created as the basis upon which to build for the next step of the climate regime. How long it will take governments to take another legally-binding agreement, what form that

will take, what contours it will consider is very much a decision up to governments. What is very clear right now is that governments are not letting that question which still needs to be answered get in the way of actually taking strong action on the ground.

Question: The United Nations Secretary-General convened a high-level advisory group on finance at the beginning of this year and that group has just published a report on finance. How will its findings feed into the Cancún talks and how do you think the group's findings with reference to the major role of the private sector will be met by Parties and have negotiators underestimated the need for private finance up to now?

Christiana: The report of the Secretary-General's high-level panel on finance has actually concluded its work, the report was handed over to the Secretary-General just last week on the 5th of November and he had a press conference in New York to launch this report. The purpose of this report was to gather as much analysis as was possible in this period as to what options governments might consider and what combination of options governments might consider to help those governments be able to source the 100 billion dollars to which they have committed this year. The conclusion from the report is that while it is going to be challenging to be able to identify the 100 billion dollars a year by the year 2020 and then moving on from there it is actually feasible to do so and it is feasible inasmuch as the package of financing sources will combine traditional and non-traditional sources will combine private and public sources it is quite evident that the investment that will come from the private sector will be there inasmuch as governments take the both at the international and as well as the national level the decisions to take the regulatory framework that is going to be the incentive to attract that kind of an investment.

Question: How do you want to ensure that this finance is new and additional, especially in Germany but also in other countries? The NGOs say the money which is pledged was pledged in other places before and is not new.

Christiana: The money to which you are referring to is I assume is the

fast-start finance which is a different issue to the long-term financing, the 100 billion that the high-level panel refers to. The fast-start finance, which is the second finance pledge put on the table by countries in Copenhagen, refers to a total of 30 billion dollars over the years 2010, 11 and 12 so let's call it an average of 10 billion dollars a year. That whose purpose it is to fast-start actions in both mitigation and adaptation in developing countries over these three years while the long-term financing structures and modalities are being constructed and agreed to. Those pledges were made at the end of last year and one has to understand at the time those pledges were made most countries if not all would already have decided on their budget for this year. So I would say that it is understandable that at least part of that funding is not this year going to be new and additional but it is also very necessary that industrialized countries understand that fast-start financing is key to success in Cancún that they need to be very transparent both about the sourcing as well as the allocation of fast-start financing particularly what has gone on with fast-start financing in the year 2010 and that they need to make very clear and incremental efforts to move quickly toward ensuring that that funding will soon become new and additional and will be able to be distributed in an equitable fashion between mitigation and adaptation.

Question: Could you please give us some details of the organization of the summit in Cancún. What will be the difference and what will be the lessons learned from Copenhagen?

Christiana: The first evident difference is the weather. In addition, the secretariat as you can imagine did a very serious examination of the logistics that were in place for Copenhagen and we derived a wealth of lessons learned on what to do differently in the future. Copenhagen was certainly the first meeting that was so highly attended – it was not expected to be such a popular meeting – and the turnout there was way above and beyond anything that was expected or planned for. That is not a situation in which we will find ourselves again. We are now planning very consciously for the number of people who can actually be in the halls within the boundaries of safety and security for those halls, we have been given that number by the Mexican government and we

are liaising both with Parties as well as with all other participants – media, non-governmental participants – to ensure that everyone who is registered will be able to get into the buildings and will be able to get into the buildings in an effective and transient way. So we will not have the long lines, we have actually already put in process as of a couple of months ago, an online registration system that allows everyone who wants to go to Cancún to have already registered and that will be very helpful in terms of the lines at the arrival points and we also have a very efficient system of bus transportation that is going to help participants move between the buildings. That does not mean that everything is going to be perfect. We will certainly be very vigilant and we will take note of issues that come up that will need to be improved ever further for the next COP.

Question: What are the main differences to the participation of NGOs? Will you limit the participation of NGOs?

Christiana: The participation of all stakeholders is limited to the total number of people who can be in the buildings at the same time. In that sense we have worked very closely over many months with NGOs to explain to them that there is a limit of participation in the buildings that are officially assigned to the Conference of the Parties and all NGOs who wanted to register have registered they know exactly how many people they can bring the first week and they can bring the same number of people the second week. All of these arrangements are very clear and NGOs are actually already making very good use of the system for registration, for arrival and for entry. In addition to that the Government of Mexico has put in place other venues both along the whole “Zona Hotelera”, this long strip of hotels that’s going to serve as overflow for side events as well as the village of Cancún itself will be the seat of many activities planned by the Government of Mexico, not just for Mexican citizens but people from all over the world who are coming. So anyone that wants to come to Cancún will find plenty of activities to participate in. However, only those who are registered to the conference will be able to get into the official premises.

** end of transcript **