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COP-15: THE UNITED NATIONS' ANNUAL MEETING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

DECEMBER 7-18, 2009

"(T)here is no time to waste. America has made our choice. We have charted our course, we have made our commitments, and we will do what we say. Now, I believe that it's time for the nations and people of the world to come together behind a common purpose. We must choose action over inaction; the future over the past – with courage and faith, let us meet our responsibility to our people, and to the future of our planet."
-- [President Barack Obama](#), December 18, 2009

The 15th Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – otherwise known as COP-15 -- brought together delegates from 192 countries met in Copenhagen, Denmark from December 7–18 to discuss climate change and map out a strategy for reducing global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. Negotiators dealt with a number of issues before crafting an international agreement on climate change that aims to be environmentally effective, politically feasible and economically sustainable.

THE U.S. COMMITMENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE

[Obama Hails Climate Change Accord as an Important Milestone](#)

President Obama worked closely with major world leaders at the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen during marathon negotiating sessions to make "a meaningful and unprecedented breakthrough" in confronting global climate change. Read full [remarks by President Obama on the Copenhagen Agreement](#).

[Bold and Decisive Action against Climate Change Called for by President Obama](#)

President recognized the responsibility and role the United States has to play in addressing climate change as the world's largest economy and as the world's second largest emitter, noting that America intends to meet that responsibility by renewing our leadership within international climate change negotiations and working with other nations to phase out fossil fuel subsidies. Read full [remarks by President Obama at the Morning Plenary Session](#).

[Clinton Urges Broad Operational Agreement on Climate Change](#)

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton urged international negotiators in Copenhagen to reach a broad operational agreement to combat climate change. In an op-ed published by the *International Herald Tribune*, the Secretary laid out a way forward that will promote sustainable development by moving the world toward a low-carbon economy. Read [full Op-Ed](#) and view transcript of [remarks by Secretary Clinton at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#).

[The U.S. Will Meet the Climate Challenge in Copenhagen and Beyond](#)

Climate change is a global challenge that demands a global solution. To this end, the United States has joined others in seeking an international agreement through the UN negotiating process. In this op-ed, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Eric G. John discusses the U.S. interest and commitment in reaching a global solution to climate change. Read more in [English](#) and in [Thai](#).

[Press Briefing by U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change](#)

In his December 14 press briefing, Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern discusses the U.S. commitment to a new international program called Climate REDI, a quick-start technology initiative through the Major Economies Forum, intended to reduce emissions, save households money and fight energy poverty. Read the [full transcript](#).

ADAPTING TO A CHANGING CLIMATE



A woman checks on water from a public faucet in Manila during El Niño water rationing in 1997.

[Forecasting Advances Help Nations Adapt to Climate Variability](#)

- As the fledgling 2009–2010 El Niño warms the waters of the central and eastern tropical Pacific, weakens trade winds and modifies tropical rainfall patterns, some regions that are most vulnerable to this climate phenomenon are doing something that only recently has become possible. They're preparing for it! Read [more](#).

[U.S. Institute Helps Developing Nations Put Climate Data to Use](#)

- As climate variability drives alterations in the physical environment, it is increasingly critical that all nations — especially the most vulnerable — are able to understand and harness climate and weather data in their efforts to adapt to a changing planet. Since 1996, a research institute established as a cooperative agreement between the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Columbia University in New York City has embraced this mission. Read [more](#).

CLIMATE CHANGE AND HEALTH



Thai boys play on a dried field at a drying reservoir in Nakhon Ratchasima province, Thailand, April 1, 2005. (© AP Images)

[Prepare for Health Effects of Climate Change, World Experts Urge](#) - Recognition of the link between climate change and health is growing and driving efforts of those who are the front-line responders — public health professionals — to make sure health care systems and global populations are prepared for the worst. Scientists worldwide agree that climate is changing as a result of human activity, and climate influences the biological functions basic to life. Read [more](#).

MITIGATING EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



The Schwarze Pumpe coal power plant in Germany runs a pilot carbon dioxide capture-and-storage project with Vattenfall Europe.

[Global Partnerships Speed Climate Change Technology Development](#) - Rising atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide (CO₂) are having an impact on more than just the climate system. The critical need to mitigate this growing problem is beginning to change the way nations share technology-development information, costs and efforts. Read [more](#).

[International Collaboration Key to Mitigating Climate Change](#) - Human activities, especially those that burn fossil fuels and emit planet-warming carbon dioxide, are driving changes in the climate system. Mitigating these changes and their potentially disastrous effects is stimulating a new kind of technology cooperation among governments, industries and institutions. Read [more](#).

PHOTO GALLERY

[Climate Change Today](#) - Carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere by human activities is causing changes in Earth's surface temperature, rainfall and sea level that are measurable now, new research says, and that will continue for the next thousand years.

[Understanding Climate Modeling](#) - Everything scientists know about the future of Earth's climate comes from models — computer programs that use mathematical equations to describe how the atmosphere, water, land, living things and energy from the sun affect each other and the climate. Find out how scientists are using models to predict changes in sea level, global temperature, weather and more.

[A Timeline of Environmental Treaties](#) - During the past half century, we learned we share a fragile biosphere. Our view of life on Earth, whether through a microscope or from a space station, is colored by the knowledge that everyday human activities can threaten our future. This list of key environmental treaties shows how nations are working together, politically and scientifically, to safeguard our planet and respond to a global threat.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHT

Facebook: [A Global Conversation on Climate: Join, Share, Act](#)

The climate is changing. What will it cost to confront the problem? What is the cost of inaction? Join the conversation and discuss alternative courses of action on Facebook today.

[Webchats on Climate Change and COP-15](#)

The CO.NX webchats provide streamed content from inside different meetings and official side events now through the end of the week, offering participants an opportunity to listen in on what's happening in Denmark and then ask questions directly to U.S. Government officials and experts involved in the negotiations. Sign up [here](#).

[Adaptation! Blog: Reducing the Impact of Climate Change](#)

A daily report on the U.S. actions in COP-15 by Cheryl Pellerin, a science writer who covers climate change, infectious diseases and space exploration for the State Department's America.gov website. Read and comment on developments coming out of COP-15 [here](#).

WEB RESOURCES

America.gov: The United States and COP-15
http://www.america.gov/cop_15.html

United States 2009 Copenhagen Website
<http://cop15.state.gov/>

U.S. Department of State Office of Global Climate Change, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)
<http://www.state.gov/g/oes/climate/>

United Nations Climate Change Conference
<http://en.cop15.dk/>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<http://www.ipcc.ch/>



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