



Doha, 26 November 2012 – The [UN Climate Change Conference in Doha](#) began today with calls for governments to focus on essential tasks ahead of them so that the meeting can deliver agreed outcomes and constitute another step forward in the global response to climate change.

The newly elected President of the Conference of the Parties ([COP 18/CMP 8](#)), H. E. Mr. Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Chairman of Qatar's Administrative Control and Transparency Authority, urged the conference to stick to agreed timetables and speedily implement already agreed decisions.

"Climate change is a common challenge for humanity. We must work in earnest for a better future for present and for future generations. We have a precious opportunity over the coming days, and we must make full use of it.

Many delegates have stressed the importance of finalizing work on time, and that requires that we all show flexibility," he said.

Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)), highlighted an important set of reports published shortly before Doha, which all point to the urgency to act to keep global average temperatures from rising beyond an internationally agreed level of 2 degrees Celsius degrees centigrade, beyond which climate impacts become extremely serious.

Analysis published by the [World Bank](#) shows the world remains firmly at risk of seeing temperatures rise towards 4 degrees Celsius by the end of the century, creating devastating effects, if current levels of ambition to curb greenhouse gas emissions are not raised.

The World Meteorological Organization says greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere

have reached yet another record high at 390.9 parts per million, with no identified change in the upwards trend. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) warns that the gap between what is needed in terms of emission reductions to stay below 2 degrees Celsius and what is so far promised by countries is still widening, not decreasing.

However, all reports underline that the technology, the funding and the policy options to remain below the 2 degrees Celsius goal are already available, provided that governments and societies take the necessary action rapidly enough.

"Expert analysis consistently says that we do have the possibility to keep on track and that to act now is safer and much less costly than to delay.

In the last three years, policy and action towards a sustainable, clean energy future has been growing faster than ever. But the door is closing fast because the pace and scale of action is simply not yet enough. So Doha must deliver its part in the longer-term solution," the UN's top climate change official Christiana Figueres said.

"Governments have said they intend to work hard to advance their decision texts before the high-level segment, so they can hand over a very limited set of options to ministers and close successfully at the end of next week," she said.

For an overview of the issues being discussed and negotiated in Doha, see below.

The UN Climate Change Conference in Doha (26 November to 7 December) is currently being attended by government delegates, representatives from business and industry, environmental organizations, research institutions and the media. More than 100 Ministers are scheduled to attend the high-level segment of the meeting, which begins on 4 December and ends with a decision-making plenary on 7 December. The opening of the high-level segment will also be attended by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

As examples of momentum for change which is already building at all levels of society, and to highlight the scope for action, the UNFCCC secretariat will be showcasing so-called "lighthouse activities" in Doha. These are prime examples of public-private climate initiatives in developing countries which have already improved the lives of the urban poor, and which can inspire governments and businesses to do more. Two further pillars of the secretariat's Momentum for

Change Initiative will be launched during the conference – one highlighting the role of women in providing solutions to climate change, and the other drawing attention to innovative approaches to climate finance.

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