



Poor countries have thrown down the gauntlet as the UN climate talks in Warsaw entered their final week and government ministers joined the negotiations.

Recognition of the impact climate change is having on food security, a mechanism to address loss and damage as the climate changes, and finance to help countries adapt are the major issues for poor countries.

By the end of the first week, during which negotiations are handled by technocrats, some developed countries had adopted rigid positions on these issues, forcing strong reactions from some countries in the south.

Prakash Mathema, chair of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group at the talks, is emphatic: "We are not going home without a loss and damage mechanism! They [some developed countries] cannot postpone this forever and ever. A commitment was made in Doha [Qatar, where the last UN talks were held in 2012] to set up a mechanism here in Warsaw." Others have upped the stakes even more.

Naderev "Yeb" Sano, the Philippines negotiator, who started fasting when Typhoon Haiyan struck his home town in the Philippines as the talks began, told IRIN on Monday - the eighth day of his protest - that he intended to continue his hunger strike until a decision to adopt a mechanism of loss and damage is made in Warsaw. One of the negotiators representing the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), some of whom are threatened with extinction, is fasting in solidarity with Sano.

The world need look no further than the catastrophe in the Philippines to comprehend the profound and dangerous consequences of a warming planet, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned in his address to the conference yesterday (19 November) urging negotiators to rise to the challenge “with wisdom and urgency” and pave the way to a binding climate deal by 2015.

“Climate change threatens current and future generations,” Mr. Ban said in his address to the high-level segment of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, taking place in Poland.

Extending his deepest condolences to those affected throughout the Philippines by Typhoon Haiyan, he said that all around the world, people now face and fear the wrath of a warming planet. “The science is clear. Human activities are the dominant cause of climate change. We cannot blame nature.”

Indeed, greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise and the consequences are profound, dangerous and known to all, the Secretary-General said, recalling a visit earlier this year to Iceland where the rate at which the glaciers are melting is among the fastest in the world. “I was told if we do not take urgent action now Iceland may be a land without ice soon.”

The UN climate talks under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are scheduled to end on Friday.

(Sources: IRIN News, UN News Centre)

