

# Paris climate deal to start green development charge: UNDP

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By Megan Rowling December 3, 2015 10:00 AM

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Plant for the Planet Foundation members speak together during the World Climate Change Conference 2015 ...

By Megan Rowling

PARIS (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - A U.N. deal on climate change in Paris should fire the starting gun for a global push on sustainable development in 2016, with no time to lose in shifting to greener, more resilient economies, the head of the U.N. development agency said.



Together with an international accord on reducing disaster risk in March and September's adoption of 17 new global goals, a comprehensive agenda will be in place for tackling global warming and eradicating poverty, said Helen Clark, administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

"This an opportunity not to be missed," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview from New York. "The direction is very, very clear."

Building a low-carbon economy that can also withstand climate shocks, such as extreme weather, will be a source of economic growth, creating jobs, exports and innovation, she emphasized.

Money, including large amounts of private-sector funding, will increasingly flow into sustainable infrastructure and utilities, she added.

She urged poorer countries to "be a fast mover" in taking advantage of new technology and funding.

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United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator Helen Clark speaks at a news conference at ...

The UNDP has worked with many developing countries to put together their national climate action plans, which 185 governments have now submitted as the building blocks for an agreement in Paris, due to be sealed next week.

Clark said these plans - to be implemented from 2020 - would put countries on a path to clean development, and tied in with their existing strategies.

"Let's all work to get developing countries into the very best position they can to access the financing that's there to do things that are vital for development," she added.

'CLIMATE JUSTICE'

In addition, more government grants - rather than commercial loans - are needed to help the most vulnerable countries overcome the rising risks they face from climate change impacts including intensifying droughts, floods and storms, and rising sea levels, she stressed.

"We do feel that basic climate justice requires support for adaptation for those who have been harmed by events they didn't cause," she said.

Developing countries - which have low historical responsibility for planet-warming carbon pollution - are calling in Paris for more cash from wealthy states to help them live with warming, and curb their emissions as they grow.

"There is a fundamental injustice in countries being set back time and time again, and having to incur greater debts and exposure to financial liability," Clark added.

But she acknowledged that budgets in many industrialized nations were tight, and large humanitarian emergencies like the Syria crisis were soaking up money that could otherwise go to longer-term development.

Clark said it was important that any agreement in Paris should include a review mechanism for emissions reductions pledges to make countries increase them regularly.

Current promises add up to warming that is "nowhere near" keeping within an internationally agreed limit of 2 degrees Celsius, she noted.

"This really can't wait too long," she said. "Paris is vital, but we need to know the next steps will be taken."

(Reporting by Megan Rowling, editing by Tim Pearce. Please credit the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, women's rights, trafficking, corruption and climate change. Visit [www.trust.org](http://www.trust.org))