

Climate change talks kick off with clock ticking

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United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. ASEAN
BANGKOK: United Nations climate change talks kicked off in the Thai capital yesterday with reminders that time is quickly running out for finalising a new climate deal in Copenhagen in December. Time is not pressing, it has almost run out, said Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Some 4,000 participants and observers have gathered in Bangkok to attend two weeks of meetings aimed at finalising the negotiating text for the next climate deal to be considered at the coming world climate summit in Copenhagen.

The main task of the Bangkok talks is to simplify the current 280-page draft agreement for Copenhagen to less than 40 pages.

The talks follow a series of international meetings on climate change at the UN in New York and the G20 in Pittsburgh that have set a positive political tone for progress in finalising a deal.

Your job now, for the next two weeks, is to engage in full negotiation mode, building on this political progress and to transform the political will into text, Connie Hedegaard, Denmark's Minister of Climate and Energy, said in her opening speech.

While the US, Japan, China and India made new commitments on emission reductions at recent meetings, the G20 failed to get the developed nations to agree on an annual US\$140 billion finance pact for developing countries to fight and adapt to climate change.

Honestly, I was disappointed with the G20 meeting last week. It failed to deliver a climate-finance plan as hoped, Hedegaard said. Developed countries must prove they are serious. We need to build the post-2010 financial architecture.

The Bangkok meeting, to be followed up by one more session on climate talks in Barcelona, coincided with an unprecedented tropical storm in Manila that has killed scores and displaced 500,000

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