

Perspectives on climate change
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Kofi Annan, Wangari Maathai, Nicholas Stern
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On the day designated as Climate Change Day in the election campaign, we urge all political parties to commit to an international climate agreement that will also provide for the world's poorest people.

Climate change is already causing severe suffering in developing countries which have done least to cause it. If left unmanaged it will derail and reverse development.

The Copenhagen Accord states that global warming must be limited to no more than two degrees. So it is vital that the international community now achieves a comprehensive UN climate agreement covering all countries to implement this goal. Such an agreement must commit developed countries especially, including the EU members, to deeper cuts in emissions than those now on the table.

Critically, additional financing is needed to increase access to knowledge and skills by the poorest countries so they can adapt to the already unavoidable consequences of climate change.

A global coalition for action on climate change cannot be secured at the expense of development. Rich countries must demonstrate that low-carbon growth is possible.

Any agreement must provide for greatly increased financial assistance, and for the sharing of technologies, to help the poorest countries adapt to climate change, reduce deforestation and make lower carbon investments.

It is imperative that this assistance includes new and additional finance, not just a reallocation of existing commitments to promote development.

We are increasingly concerned that some countries are refusing to commit to additional finance for climate change and instead seem intent on taking climate assistance solely from monies already allocated for development. Such evident injustice would be unacceptable and would jeopardise any future climate agreement.

The two defining challenges of our century are overcoming poverty and managing climate change. If we fail on one, we will fail on the other. Over recent years British leadership has done much to advance global progress in both areas. It is vital for the world that this is maintained, whoever forms the new UK Government.

Kofi Annan

Chair, Africa Progress Panel, and former UN Secretary-General

Wangari Maathai

Chair and Founder, Green Belt Movement, and 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Winner

Nicholas Stern