

Clue: A major city**MUNICH**

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

guardian.co.uk

Poor nations to get funds to fight climate change

AP foreign, Saturday December 13 2008

By ARTHUR MAX

Associated Press Writer= POZNAN, Poland (AP) — Negotiators at a U.N. climate conference broke through red tape and freed up millions of dollars Friday to help poor countries adapt to increasingly severe droughts, floods and other effects of global warming.

"This could be the one thing to come out of Poznan," said Kit Vaughan of WWF-Britain.

The decision in the final hours of the two-week conference could begin to release some \$60 million (euro45 million) within months, according to delegates and environmentalists following the closed-door talks.

"This is an important step," said delegate Mozaharul Alam of Bangladesh.

Alam said ministers and senior delegates from dozens of countries decided to give a blocked fund's governing board the authority to directly disburse money to developing countries for projects to reduce greenhouse gases.

Until now, the U.N.-backed Adaptation Fund board could not operate because its board had no right to approve and sign those contracts.

The fund is derived from a 2 percent levy on offset investments that industrial nations make on green projects in the developing world. The negotiators have been discussing other ways to ramp up the fund into the billions.

The agreement was one of the few concrete goals the delegates set for Poznan when the talks began Dec. 1. Delegations from nearly 190 countries are negotiating a new climate change pact, to be completed next December in the Danish capital of Copenhagen, that would succeed the Kyoto Protocol when it expires in 2012.

Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, who shared last year's Nobel peace prize for raising awareness of climate change, urged the conference to stay focused on the task of reducing global carbon emissions that have already begun to change the conditions of life on Earth.

Winning cheers and ovations, Gore called on heads of state to convene several climate change summits over the next 12 months to spur on the talks ahead of the crucial meeting in Copenhagen.

This challenge "affects the survival of human civilization," Gore said.

"We cannot negotiate with the facts, we cannot negotiate with the truth about our situation, we cannot negotiate with the consequences of unrestrained dumping of 70 million tons of global warming pollution into the thin shell of atmosphere surrounding

our planet every 24 hours," he said.

Environmentalists have complained that the Poznan conference was hamstrung by delays and low ambitions.

"There is still time to rescue the minimum acceptable outcome from Poland, but we need to ensure that in 2009 we hit the ground running," said Julie-Anne Richards of Oxfam, a British-based humanitarian agency.

The conference "could have been much more robust," said Gustavo Silva-Chavez, of the Environmental Defense Fund based in New York.

The conference marks the midway point in a two-year negotiating process begun last year in Bali, Indonesia, to reach a new treaty in December 2009.

Ministers and top officials from 145 countries concluded in a round table discussion late Thursday that the negotiations over the next year should produce an ambitious agreement that can be ratified by all countries.

Still, progress has been slowed as negotiators wait for the new and more climate-friendly government of President-elect Barack Obama to take over from the outgoing Bush administration.

U.S. Senator John Kerry, who is in line for chairmanship of the powerful Foreign Relations Committee, told The Associated Press that a new draft treaty should be possible even if the U.S. does not impose mandatory limits on greenhouse gases before the next pivotal climate conference.

"I think Copenhagen should produce a treaty fundamentally geared to reductions of emissions," Kerry said.

Associated Press writers Geir Moulson, Vanessa Gera and Ryan Lucas contributed to this report.

guardian.co.uk © Guardian News and Media Limited 2008