

Longest UN climate talks end with no deal on carbon markets



Madrid, December 15 (RHC)-- Environmental groups and activists accused the world's richest countries of showing little commitment to seriously tackling climate change after marathon talks ended in a deal described as "watered down and weak."

International climate talks closed on Sunday in Madrid, Spain with negotiators postponing until next year a key decision on global carbon markets. After two weeks of negotiations on tackling global warming, delegates from almost 200 nations passed declarations calling for greater ambition in cutting planet-heating greenhouse gases and in helping poor countries suffering the effects of climate change.

But despite holding the longest climate talks ever in 25 nearly annual editions, they left one of the thorniest issues for the next summit in Glasgow in a year's time - how to deal with carbon emissions.

The climate discussions were accompanied at times by angry protests from indigenous and environmental groups, both inside and outside the venue. The demonstrations reflected growing frustration, particularly among young people, at the slow pace of government efforts to curb climate change.

Many developing countries and campaigners wanted to see much more explicit language spelling out the importance of countries submitting bolder pledges on emissions as the Paris Agreement process enters a

crucial implementation phase next year.

"These talks reflect how disconnected country leaders are from the urgency of the science and the demands of their citizens in the streets," said Helen Mountford, vice president for climate and economics at the World Resources Institute think-tank. "They need to wake up in 2020."

Brazil, China, Australia, Saudi Arabia and the United States had led resistance to bolder action, delegates said. Scientists say greenhouse gas emissions must start dropping sharply as soon as possible to prevent global temperatures rising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century.

Sunday's agreement fell well short of what science says is needed to tackle the climate emergency. The COP25 deal "expresses the urgent need" for new carbon-cutting commitments to close the gap between current emissions and goals of capping global warming at below 2C, host country Spain said in a statement.

Given the stakes -- the survival of civilisation, no less -- it did not seem unreasonable to expect 196 nations gathered in Madrid to forge a global warming action plan to declare, in clear and simple language, that they would do more.

But welcome to the world of climate diplomacy, where the difference between "shall" and "should" can be debated for days, and determine whether a treaty has teeth or is toothless. Reaction to the talks from climate activists was angry as negotiations resumed on Sunday.

"I think it's disastrous, profoundly distressing," said Mohamed Adow, director of the Power Shift Africa group. "The draft outcome that has been put forward to the Chilean presidency is disgraceful - completely unacceptable."

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