

UK Statement for WCC-3 High-Level Segment

Madame Prime Minister, Honourable Under Secretary of Commerce, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates.

Many have already drawn attention to the growing risks of climate change. They have also emphasised the need to complete a comprehensive deal at Copenhagen that takes the sober scientific advice of the IPCC seriously. This means keeping greenhouse gas concentrations below levels that would cause a 2 degree rise in global temperatures. Global emissions need to have peaked before 2020 and then reduce rapidly thereafter, declining by 50% by 2050. This will require early action to reduce emissions by developed countries and appropriate actions by developing countries to reduce emissions below their baselines.

However, we are conscious that even if we take this action we are still committed to a change in our climate, and so adaptation will be a vital part of the deal in Copenhagen.

But agreements need to be converted into real action. Concerted action by Governments and the mobilisation of all sectors of society will be required if the challenges of both mitigation and adaptation are to be met. Science has an essential role to play here. Clear information on the nature of the threat is needed to motivate and inform actions and mobilise all sectors of society to make the massive changes that will need to occur in the way we generate and use energy, organise our lives, build our homes and cities and feed ourselves. Adaptation to climate change will need to be underpinned by reliable, relevant and comprehensive climate information.

So the United Kingdom is proud to be a sponsor of this Conference and delighted that it has agreed to develop a Framework for Climate Services. This will have an important role to play in supporting adaptation responses to climate change by providing basic information on how our climate is changing. It will require essential engagement between users and providers, and as a result will lead to the development of new products and delivery mechanisms. Involvement of users, both nationally and internationally will be essential over the development phase of the Framework. This will raise new challenges but will result in a greater degree of engagement of a wider community to deal with climate change.

Delegates.

The UK has considerable experience in the provision of climate services. The UK Met Office has a proven track record as providers of seasonal to decadal forecasts, climate change scenario information and helping business sectors to adapt to climate change. It is unique in combining operational weather services with climate prediction. In June this year they produced new projections for the UK for adaptation. The UK Climate Impacts Programme is using these to help users develop adaptation strategies. The UK also faces formidable adaptation challenges. For example, sea level rise threatens London and our experts have assessed such risks and how to adapt the Thames Barrier which currently protects the Capital from storm surges.

We are ready and willing to share our expertise as we have already done for example with regional modelling through the PRECIS programme which has engaged almost 100 countries.

Madame Prime Minister, Honourable Under Secretary,

We are able and keen to support the Framework's implementation and are ready to contribute, building on our existing climate services.

The UK will be an honest and trusted partner, and a tireless part of the global team which will tackle the climate challenge. We have taken an important step together at this Conference. We need to maintain momentum and build on our partnerships to achieve a successful outcome at Copenhagen. We need to deliver climate friendly societies for the current and future generations, uniting as never before to protect our planet, through sustainable development.

Distinguished delegates, thank you.