



# The United Nations: Taking Action on Climate Change

***“Let us find common ground. Let us recognize that the effects of climate change affect us all. And that they have become so severe and so sweeping that only urgent, global action will do. We are all in this together. We must work together.”***

*Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon*

Today there is no uncertainty about whether or why climate change is taking place. The issue has now catapulted to the top of the international agenda, in no small part because of the recent findings of the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), where scientists have confirmed that the Earth’s temperature is warming and that the warming is largely due to human activities.

Overcoming the threat of climate change is the defining challenge of our age. The world needs a breakthrough at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali because any further delay in acting could push us past a tipping point that will dramatically increase the ecological, human and financial costs. Urgent action is not only necessary but also possible and affordable.

The United Nations has long been at the forefront of bringing the issue to the world’s attention. It has informed the world on the science of climate change, it has assisted in forging agreements to address climate change, and it is working with national governments to develop strategies to adapt to the new realities caused by climate change as well as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The UN is now taking steps to move its own operations, at headquarters and in the field, towards climate neutrality.

While all parts of the UN system are engaged in addressing particular aspects of climate change, the entire organization is committed to supporting international efforts to develop a comprehensive and multilateral framework for confronting climate change on an urgent basis. This press kit provides an overview from agencies across the UN system on the broad range of actions and processes they are working on to help countries address climate change.

## **Finding out the facts**

Sound and unbiased information about climate change is a fundamental prerequisite for action and the UN plays a central role in supporting global weather and climate observation and predictions systems. The IPCC, the co-winner of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, was recognized for its “efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change.”

The findings of the latest IPCC report are very much in line with earlier projections. What has changed, however, is the degree of certainty about the findings. Climate change has already caused a 0.7°C rise in the Earth’s temperature during the 20th century and warming is expected to continue at the rate of 0.2°C per decade, according to the IPCC. As a result, the report found, “Unmitigated climate change would, in the long term, be likely to exceed the capacity of natural, managed and human systems to adapt.”

## **Supporting Action on Climate Change**

The UN system stands ready to provide maximum support for efforts to confront climate change by providing a framework and forum for the negotiations and by working with countries at the national, regional and global levels in tackling the multifaceted challenges presented by climate change.

