News Release

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Environmental damage: a global solution needed, says Gore

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The Former U.S. Vice-President and Nobel Laureat Al Gore called for global efforts to tackle the problem of climate change. Speaking at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting session on climate change in Davos-Klosters, Mr Gore said that spending plans should include a commitment to invest in green projects.

"We are running out of time, we must have a planetary solution to a planetary crisis," Mr Gore urged.

His call for urgency comes as world leaders prepare to meet at the United Nations Climate Change Conference Copenhagen at the end of 2009 to set a global framework for tackling global warming and climate change.

" What we most need out of Copenhagen is a clear, shared vision of where the world is going in the future, " Gore said. " The assumption that we can continue on this path is the assumption that we are collapsing. "

There are hopes that the new U.S. administration will take a more active role in the negotiations to reach a new global agreement. To reflect the change of commitment, the US House of Representatives recently passed a US$820 billion stimulus package that includes spending on energy-efficient projects.

" The new administration is very serious about this, " Gore said. " Obama is the greenest person in the room [White House]. He is pushing hard for a dramatic and bold move in the right direction. If other governments do the same then we can make the change to a low-carbon future. "

Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen of Denmark who is host of the UN Climate Change Conference said it is essential for heads of states to engage in the process and for countries to commit to reducing their current levels of CO2 emissions. " The essential thing is to agree on clear targets because it is a prerequisite for creating a private market, " said Rasmussen. " Policies we need to overcome financial crises are the same to combat climate change … green efficiency is sound economics. "

Yvo De Boer, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, said clear commitments, adequate financing and global governance will be critical for a global climate change agreement. " I think we already have a shared vision, " he said. " This indicates that we have to get this right in Copenhagen. "

Jeroen van der Veer, Chief Executive, Royal Dutch Shell, Netherlands; Co-Chair of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2009, also stressed the importance of a long-term international framework and coordinated international standards, which should include an effective emission trading system. " You have to price CO2, and if you save CO2 there should be an award, " he said. " At the end of day, I see CO2 as an opportunity and don ' t see the financial crisis as a reason to slow down. "

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