

GRF Copenhagen Update No.7

16 December 2009

Climate talks deadlocked as clashes erupt outside

(en.cop15.dk) - Hundreds of protesters were trying to disrupt the 193-nation conference, the latest action in days of demonstrations to demand "climate justice" — firm action to combat global warming. Police said 230 protesters were detained.

Inside the cavernous Bella Center convention hall, negotiators dealing with core issues debated until just before dawn without setting new goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions or for financing poorer countries' efforts to cope with coming climate change, key elements of any deal.

"I regret to report we have been unable to reach agreement," John Ashe of Antigua, chairman of one negotiating group, reported to the full 193-nation conference later Wednesday morning.

In those overnight talks, the American delegation apparently objected to a proposed text it felt might bind the United States prematurely to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, before the US Congress acts on the required legislation. US envoys insisted, for example, on replacing the word "shall" with the conditional "should."

Hundreds of protesters marched on the suburban Bella Center, where lines of Danish riot police waited in protective cordons. Some demonstrators said they wanted to take over the global conference and turn it into a "people's assembly," and as they approached police lines they were hit with pepper spray.

After nine days of largely unproductive talks, the lower-level delegates were wrapping up the first phase of the two-week conference and handing off the disputes to environment ministers in a critical second phase.

The lack of progress disheartened many, including small island states threatened by the rising seas of global warming.



The High level Panel started in Copenhagen, in his address H.E. Chavez Frias stated that the Rich countries are destroying the world.

"We are extremely disappointed," Ian Fry of the tiny Pacific nation of Tuvalu declared on the conference floor. "I have the feeling of dread we are on the Titanic and sinking fast. It's time to launch the lifeboats."

Others were far from abandoning ship. "Obviously there are things we are concerned about, but that is what we have to discuss," Sergio Barbosa Serra, Brazil's climate ambassador, told The Associated Press. "I would like to think we can get a deal, a good and fair deal."