

PRESS RELEASE

A Long Way to Go: "From Bali to Poznan"

Conference on Climate Change, Security and Sustainable Development

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The impact of climate change on international security was the theme of a conference at the European Parliament on 18 December 2007 organised by the Institute for Environmental Security (IES). The objectives were to assess the results of the Bali UNCCC and to exchange information on the state of play in the nexus between climate change, security and sustainable development in the lead up to COP 14 in Poznan at the end of 2008. 130 experts from international organisations, EU institutions, governments, research institutes and NGOs attended. After a quick overview of the highlights of the Bali conference, the discussion focused on the security implications of climate change and the action needed - a relationship at the core of the IES strategy.

Andrew Standley, Acting Director in DG RELEX in the European Commission characterized climate change as a "threat multiplier". Climate change has the potential to disrupt already unstable economies, increase poverty, undermine development efforts, enhance tensions over scarce resources and drive people off their land. Therefore it involves "everybody, everywhere, in every policy field". The weaker the governance systems in place and the weaker the economy, the weaker the ability to cope, to adapt. "If the international community is not able to provide solutions, we are likely to see more unilateral moves by countries, more tensions between the rich who can cope and the poor who cannot", Standley said. Colonel Portelli, Chief, Europe Division of the United States European Command insisted that in light of these threats it is paramount not to take a "stovepipe approach", but instead look across traditional compartments from a global point of view.

The immense threat to humankind represented by climate change underlines the necessity of new forms of international cooperation. Harris Gleckman from IES stressed the need to involve international organisations such as WTO, IMF and the World Bank. Significant changes will be needed in the international financial and trade regimes to help facilitate the coming two year climate change negotiation process and subsequent 10 year implementation period.

Michael Ryan, Defence Advisor, United States Mission to the EU concluded that "Multi-nationalism has now resulted in multi-organisationism. Because of this evolution we, the international community, could find ourselves in a position to apply significant resources to the most pressing problems in a coordinated manner – or not. ... Is climate change enough motivation for us to finally get serious?" "I think it is" he said.

More information on the conference is available at:

<http://www.envirosecurity.org/activities/diplomacy/gfsp/climate/>



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