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Climate Deal Imperfect, But 'We Have To Be Realistic' Official Says

by Tim Sturrock | December 21, 2009

The UN-sponsored climate change summit, which ended Saturday in Copenhagen, did not produce a legally binding treaty as hoped, but the summit did create some progress, particularly the $30 billion in aid pledged to developing countries, the Ministry of Environment's climate change chief said yesterday.

"Ideally, it's not fine," said Tin Ponlok, national project coordinator for the Ministry of Environment's climate change office. However, Mr Ponlok said, "we have to be realistic."

The 193 nations present at the summit produced no formal consensus by the end of the two-week conference but the so-called Copenhagen Accord signed by the world's developed powers, including the US, Japan and the EU, made pledges for forest protection, transparency on emission levels and a large aid package for developing nations, according to media reports.

"You have close to 200 parties negotiating and to get an agreement on something so complex is difficult," Mr Ponlok said. "The countries need to work further to come up with a concrete step how to reach this."

The Copenhagen Accord pledges $30 billion in aid over the next three years to mitigate the affects of climate change on developing countries and reduce emissions, Mr Ponlok said.

For Cambodia, where 80 percent of the population are farmers, the effect of climate change could be devastating, Mr Ponlok said, adding that it's too early to say how much of the Copenhagen aid money will flow to Cambodia.

Eric Buysman, a consultant with the French environmental organization Geres, said he hoped countries will eventually agree to a legally binding treaty.

"Since there is not a framework, that is very disappointing for us as well as Cambodia and other developing countries," he said, adding that the pledged aid would likely go to projects such as irrigation, which will help countries adapt to weather changes such as drought.

Cambodia was part of a group of 130 poor and emerging nations that suspended negotiations for part of last week's talks, accusing industrialized countries of doing too little to cut emissions and pay for mitigating measures in developing countries.

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