Copenhagen climate summit: Ed Miliband blames China for 'disappointing' results

Ed Miliband, the Climate Change Secretary, has blamed China for the "disappointing" results of the Copenhagen conference, but insisted important progress was made in the fight against global warming.

Ed Miliband at the Copenhagen climate summit Photo: REUTERS

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Mr MIliband rejected the argument that having no deal would have been better than the limited deal agreed at the **summit**, but he pointed the finger at China for blocking an agreement on legally-binding emissions targets and a 50 per cent cut in greenhouse gases by 2050.

"We got a lot of commitments, not just from developed countries, but developing countries like China and India as well," Mr Miliband told Sky News' Sunday Live.

"The eventual outcome was disappointing. The most important reason actually is not so much to do with the commitments - because there are actually quite important and good commitments on emissions and finances - but on the issue of it becoming legally binding."

Efforts to give legal force to the commitments in the Copenhagen accord came up against "impossible resistance from a small number of developing countries, including China, who didn't want a legal agreement," he added.

"If leading countries hold out against something like 'legally binding' or against the 2050 target of 50% reductions in carbon emissions - which was held out against by countries like China - you are not

going to get the agreement you want."

Mr Miliband dismissed claims by Sudanese delegate Lumumba Di-Aping that the failure to reach an ambitious deal condemned the people of Africa to the equivalent of the Holocaust.

"The fact is that we have got fast-start finance of $10 billion a year flowing as a result of this agreement. That will help those people who people like Ambassador Lumumba of Sudan claim to be concerned about", he said.

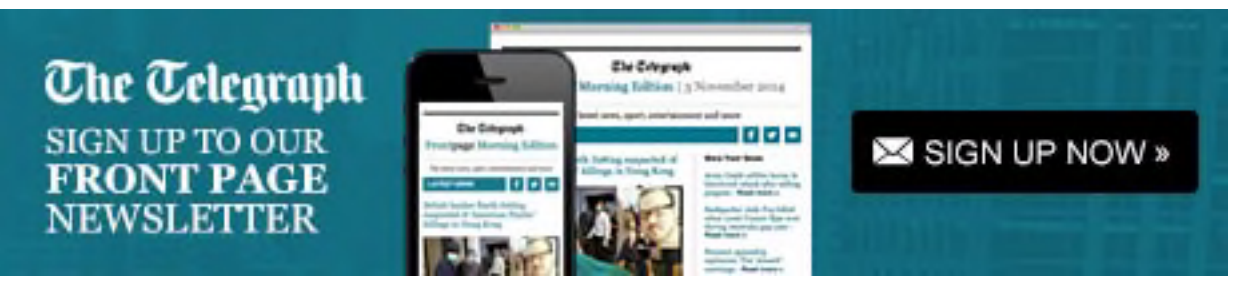
"We have got important cuts for rich and developing countries in their emissions. We won't know the precise shape of them until the beginning of February and we are going to have to push for them to be higher.

"But the idea that walking away from agreement would have been better for people facing climate change is frankly ridiculous...

"Even though there were things we didn't achieve, the fact is we have got for the first time developing countries coming together and saying that they are going to reduce emissions and the finance is flowing."

He also rejected claims Britain and the EU were "sidelined" by their absence from a meeting at which Barack Obama, the US President, and the leaders of China, India, Brazil and South Africa agreed on the basic shape of the final agreement.

"I don't think that was the meeting that in the end decided the agreement," he said. "The big decisions took place in a group of about 30 countries in which (French) President (Nicolas) Sarkozy, (German) Chancellor (Angela) Merkel and Gordon Brown were represented."



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