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Commission proposes a global alliance to help developing countries most affected by climate change

The European Commission is proposing to build a new alliance on climate change between the European Union and the poor developing countries that are most affected and that have the least capacity to deal with climate change. Through this Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA), the EU and these countries will work jointly to integrate climate change into poverty reduction strategies. The EU will provide substantial resources to address climate change in these countries. Measures will include better preparedness for natural disasters which are expected to become more frequent and intense through global warming. The GCCA renews the commitment of the EU Action Plan on Climate Change and Development to systematically integrate climate change into development cooperation.

Developing countries will be the hardest hit by the effects of climate change and therefore need our help to mitigate climate change and to adapt to the changes already occurring. New technology is only one way of developing towards a sustainable society without hampering development and quality of life. This communication, presented by Development and Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Louis Michel in association with Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas and External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, aims to provide for a broader range of actions through dialogue and exchange as well as practical cooperation between EU and the developing countries.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that most regions in the world, and especially those in the developing world, will be increasingly affected by climate change. Poor developing countries, and in particular the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) will be among the countries hit earliest and hardest.

The EU has a leadership role in promoting international action to tackle climate change. The Spring Council 2007 put forward concrete proposals for a post-2012 international climate change agreement, and committed to significant cuts in the EU's greenhouse gas emissions. The Global Climate Change Alliance will be an important pillar of the EU's external action on climate change, reaching out to the countries least responsible for, but most affected by global warming.

Assistance provided under the Global Climate Change Alliance is proposed to focus on five areas: implementing concrete adaptation measures; reducing emissions from deforestation; helping poor countries take advantage from the global carbon market; helping poor countries to be better prepared for natural disasters, and integrating climate change into development cooperation and poverty reduction strategies. As Climate change affects many sectors, it needs to be integrated into poverty reduction efforts in order to ensure sustainability. Systematic climate risk assessment and mainstreaming of climate change into development strategies and programmes ("climate proofing") are imperative in this regard.

The Commission already earmarked €50 million to the GCCA over the period 2008-10. But substantially more resources are needed to provide a response that adequately responds to the needs. Therefore an appeal is made to the EU Member States to dedicate part of their agreed commitments to increase Official Development Assistance over the coming years to the cause of coping with climate change in the most vulnerable countries.

The first occasion to discuss the Alliance with developing country partners will be the European Development Days held in Lisbon from 7th to 9th November and focusing on climate change and development.

Over the past years the link between climate change and the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events became amply clear. Seven of the ten deadliest disasters of the last 20 years have occurred between 2000 and 2006. Only since July 2007, the European Commission has provided €24.5 million to the victims of natural disasters in Colombia, Caribbean, Peru, Kenya, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, North Korea and the Sudan. The Global Climate Change Alliance aims to assist the most vulnerable countries in the prevention of and their preparedness for natural disasters.