

U.N. climate change talks open in Montreal

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Formal U.N. talks started Monday in Montreal, Canada, on how to limit emissions of greenhouse gases after the Kyoto Protocol expires in 2012.

Delegates will also discuss how targets on cutting greenhouse gas emissions will be set and met during the next seven years.

Greenhouse gases are blamed on producing global warming, the consequences of which the president of Britain's Royal Society says are comparable with using weapons of mass destruction, the BBC reported.

EU Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas reportedly wants to "raise the bar" by asking rapidly developing nations such as China to make commitments to limit emissions. But the United States continues to oppose mandatory national targets, regardless of whether developing countries participate.

The Montreal meeting is the first U.N. climate conference since the Kyoto Protocol came into force earlier this year.

Most of the world's governments, including Kyoto critics Australia and the United States, are committed under a 1992 U.N. treaty to prevent "dangerous" climate change. And that forms the basis for the new talks, New Scientist said.

But observers told the BBC the United States is apparently determined to oppose any long-term action to combat global climate change.

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