

# New York gears up for historic climate march

September 19 2014

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South Street Seaport, an area of lower Manhattan that was severely flooded during Hurricane Sandy, on March 31, 2014 in New York City

Celebrities, activists and political leaders were mobilizing Sunday to join tens of thousands of people to march through New York in what organizers hope will be the largest climate change protest in history.

Hollywood actor Leonardo DiCaprio, former US vice president turned

advocate Al Gore, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio are due to take part in the "People's Climate March."

The event has been endorsed by more than 1,400 organizations, including environment, faith and justice groups, as well as labor unions. Students have mobilized marchers at more than 300 college campuses.

The New York demonstration will take place alongside 2,500 marches and events all over the world, including large rallies in Melbourne, London and Paris.

The rallies will take place ahead of a climate change summit hosted by Ban Tuesday on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.

Ricken Patel, executive director of Avaaz, a pressure group that is one of the organizers, will present a petition signed by two million people to Ban.

"We feel very confident that we will achieve our goal, which is to have the largest climate change march in history," Patel told AFP.

The protest will wind its way through midtown Manhattan on a two-mile (3.2-kilometer) route starting at 11:30 am (1530 GMT).

After a moment of silence, participants will be encouraged to use instruments, alarms and whistles to make as much noise as possible at 1 pm, helped by marching bands and the tolling of church bells.

New York mayor de Blasio announced that the Big Apple was committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent over 2005 levels by 2050.

"Climate change is an existential threat to New Yorkers and our planet. Acting now is nothing short of a moral imperative," he said before the rally.

The UN secretary general is urging governments to support an ambitious global agreement to dramatically reduce global warming pollution.

More than 120 heads of state and almost 40 ministers are due to attend the summit that Ban hopes will energize negotiations on reaching a deal on cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

The meeting will set the stage for a crucial conference in Paris in December 2015 aimed at finalizing an agreement.

"We are breaking ground here on many different levels," UN climate chief Christiana Figueres told reporters on Friday.

"First, we're going to see unprecedented public mobilization for climate action."

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