

Hollande, leaders call for investments in the green economy

January 23 2015, by John Heilprin



French President Francois Hollande delivers a speech during a panel session at the 45th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, WEF, in Davos, Switzerland, Friday, Jan. 23, 2015. (AP Photo/Keystone, Jean-Christophe Bott)

Climate change and poverty took center stage Friday at the World Economic Forum in Davos, where leaders began campaigning in earnest for twin global accords aimed at cooling the planet and easing the suffering of multitudes.

French President Francois Hollande, Rwandan President Paul Kagame and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon were among the power-brokers urgently seeking support for two long-sought deals. They warned that the planet will overheat and many children will suffer unless the agreements are clinched this year.

"Future generations will judge us harshly if we fail," Ban said.

Hollande, who will host the next crucial round of climate talks, called for "huge investment" in green technology to fight [global warming](#) and poverty. Talks are slated for December in Paris to set a legally binding climate pact focused on [carbon emissions](#) cuts from 2020.

His nation is spending the year trying to persuade more than 190 countries to set aside differences over historical responsibility for [greenhouse gas emissions](#) levels and who should pay to produce a binding accord to limit industrial emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases.

The other set of U.N.-brokered talks is scheduled for September in New York to establish the next round of sustainable development and poverty-cutting goals through 2030.

The United Nations' first round of development goals adopted in 2000 have significantly reduced global poverty, and the world body has led the campaign for action to combat climate change.



Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon delivers a speech during a panel session at the World Economic Forum, WEF, in Davos, Switzerland, Friday, Jan. 23, 2015. (AP Photo/Keystone, Jean-Christophe Bott)

Kagame said the way forward depends on sidestepping "political deadlocks" to encourage more cooperation between governments, businesses and people.

"We are not making a choice between environmental protection and economic development," he said. "We are rather looking at how we combine both."

Half the world's deforestation is linked to hunger, one of the reasons why [climate change](#) and poverty reduction are "different sides of the same coin," said Unilever CEO Paul Polman, adding that falling oil prices give a unique opportunity to invest in new and cleaner technologies.



President of Rwanda Paul Kagame attends a panel session at the World Economic Forum, WEF, in Davos, Switzerland, Friday, Jan. 23, 2015. (AP Photo/Keystone, Jean-Christophe Bott)

"We need competitive technology—cheap is a relative term," Polman said. "Increasingly, we are seeing the green energy is the cheap energy."

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim said cleaner technologies could help spur at least \$1.8 trillion in economic growth.

The ultimate goal of U.N. climate negotiations is to stabilize greenhouse gases at a level that keeps global warming below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit), compared with pre-industrial times.



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