

Nations begin drafting climate action 'operating manual' at UN conference in Bonn

The latest round of United Nations climate change negotiations began on Monday in Bonn, Germany to further develop the "operating manual" for implementing the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement, which aims to keep temperature rises this century, well below 2 degrees Celsius.

"We are witnessing the severe impacts of climate change throughout the world", said the Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change, Patricia Espinosa, at a press conference.

"Every credible scientific source is telling us that these impacts will only get worse if we do not address climate change and it also tells us that our window of time for addressing it is closing very soon," she added.

"We need to dramatically increase our ambitions," stressed the UNFCCC chief, outlining three priorities.

First, all stakeholders – including governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses, investors and citizens – must accelerate climate action by 2020.

Second, she said, the international community must complete the Paris Agreement guidelines, or operating manual, to unleash the potential of the accord.

Third, conditions must be improved to enable countries to be more ambitious in determining their own national policies to slow down global warming.

At the UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) held last November under the leadership of Fiji, nations agreed to accelerate and complete their work to put in place the guidelines – officially known as the Paris Agreement Work Programme (PAWP) – at COP24 in Katowice, Poland next December.

At this Bonn meeting, which will run through 10 May, Governments will start drafting texts to be finalized at COP24.

Finishing off the operating manual is also necessary to assess whether the world is on track to achieve the goals of the historic Paris Agreement limiting greenhouse gas emissions, while pursuing efforts to keep the temperature rise to less than 1.5°C.

Throughout this year, countries will also focus on how they can scale up their climate ambition and implementation in the pre-2020 period. All countries share the view that climate action prior to 2020 is essential.