

PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

## Dismantling the Barriers to a Sustainable Future

Berlin, 10 November, 2009 – Using the correct science to fight global warming, more integrated and just solutions and a greater dose of political will were among key barriers to a sustainable future flagged here at a special session organized by the Green Cross International at the 10th Nobel Peace Laureates Summit.

The overall theme of the Berlin Summit (10-11 November, 2009) is “Breaking down new walls for a world without violence.” The two-hour GCI evening session was devoted to “Walls of menace to the Environment: Breaking down the walls that constrain environmental and sustainable development prospects.”

Alexander Likhotal, President of Green Cross International, moderated the session. The Session Leaders included: Martin Frick (Director General of the Global Humanitarian Forum); Prof. Mohan Munasinghe (Shared 2007 Nobel Peace Prize as Vice-Chair IPCC-AR-4); Ian Dunlop (Independent international energy consultancy group); and Thomas Stelzer (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, UN).

In less developed countries, climate change already causes damage that is equal to all the Official Development Assistance given to them, according to Martin Frick. “The 50 LDCs contribute less than one per cent to global carbon dioxide accumulation. Yet they bear the brunt of the climate change effects.”

“There are growing risks of a global breakdown because the shocks are coming persistently,” observed Prof. Mohan Munasinghe. “Climate change is seen as the ultimate threat multiplier.” He called for a serious change in the mindset to play down selfishness and greed and enhance enlightened self-interest. The G-20, he opined, should be assisted by civil society representatives (C-20) and business representatives (B-20).

Citing climate change as an increasing threat to global security and stability, Alexander Likhotal said for meaningful solutions, economic and social drivers needed to change. He apprised the session of the recent creation of the Climate Change Task Force\*, led by President Mikhail Gorbachev, Founding President of the Green Cross International. In addition to Mr. Likhotal, two other members of the Task Force – Ian Dunlop and Prof. Munasinghe were participating in the session.

Mr. Likhotal pointed out three clear goals for the Task Force: To urge governments to

maximise the opportunities Copenhagen offers for a strong and coherent climate deal; To "recalibrate" the international response to climate change in line with the danger posed to human security and development; and to engage civil society in the search for appropriate and adequate solutions by building the critical mass for a deep-rooted societal change.

Talking on the possibility of a meaningful deal in Copenhagen, Ian Dunlop said there was "complete disconnect" between science and the policy being built around it. "The implications of limiting temperature rise to 2 degrees centigrade would only give you 50 per cent chance of avoiding dangerous climate change. Instead of 2 degrees, we have to be looking at a one degree centigrade limit. We are already at 0.8 degree since pre-industrial levels – so the room left is little. "

Ambassador Thomas Stelzer observed that though it looked like Copenhagen may not result in a legally binding agreement, it certainly would be the platform for a politically binding agreement. "Then it would have to happen in Mexico next year or earlier. But that would affect the summit on Millennium Development Goals next year."

In an emotive appeal to the session, Emily Büning (German Youth Delegate to the UN General Assembly) said it was the younger generation on whom the burden falls. "We feel devastated that nothing is moving on Copenhagen. Why can't we move? The stalling must end. We will be there in Copenhagen. We cannot force future generations to pay our debts."

There was a lively exchange of views during questions by the audience, with the issue of generational justice coming to the fore. The audience felt that the Nobel Laureates should use their moral authority to honestly tell the world leaders if they were off course in dealing strategically with climate change to save our planet.

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- For more information on the Climate Change Task Force, please see press release dated 6 October 2009 in the news section of GCI website at <http://www.gci.ch>
- For a webcast of the special session please visit <http://www.nobelpeace-summits.org/web-tv/>
- For more information, please *contact* [media@gci.ch](mailto:media@gci.ch) or +41 22 789 1662.