

# ASEAN calls for action vs climate change

MANILA – The Secretary General of ASEAN has called on the global community to act immediately on climate change issues to save the planet from irreversible damage due to global warming.

Referring to the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change report, Surin Pitsuwan stressed that the cost of action now would only cost 1 percent of world's income, while inaction would cost more than 20 percent in the future. The loss of human life and suffering which cannot be economically compensated was also underlined.

Surin made the call during a breakfast dialogue with the heads of delegation and other senior representatives from ASEAN Member States attending the Bangkok Climate Change Talks from 28 September to 9 October 2009.

"The key message from the recent G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh is that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen in December 2009 must succeed. For this, there should be demonstrable progress made at this Bangkok Climate Change Talks," said Surin, who had earlier attended the Summit.

He emphasized that the grave concern expressed and bold political commitments made by the world leaders should find its way into the ongoing negotiations, so that a fair and equitable outcome could be reached in Copenhagen, with the participation of all countries based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and respective capabilities.

On the regional level, the ASEAN Leaders had issued a declaration at the Bali Climate Change Talks in 2007, and are preparing to issue a Joint Statement at the forthcoming Conference in Copenhagen.

The Secretary General further called upon the ASEAN negotiators to speak with one voice on issues that are common to ASEAN so that the region's interest will be protected. Surin said that while the whole world would suffer, ASEAN is especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The ASEAN region possesses unique natural ecosystems and resources which feeds the world and sustains the global environment.

"We are suffering even now, with storms, floods, earthquake and other natural calamities. We do not have to make these calamities even worse," said the Secretary General, who just visited the earthquake affected areas in Sumatra, Indonesia.

The Secretary General also offered to use his good offices to promote work on climate change in the longer term.

"I will ensure that there is a greater focus on enhanced cross-sectoral collaboration, more region specific studies to support targeted action, and to work with our partners from outside the region to forge global partnership in implementation," he said.

ASEAN groups together Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. (*Inquirer.net*)

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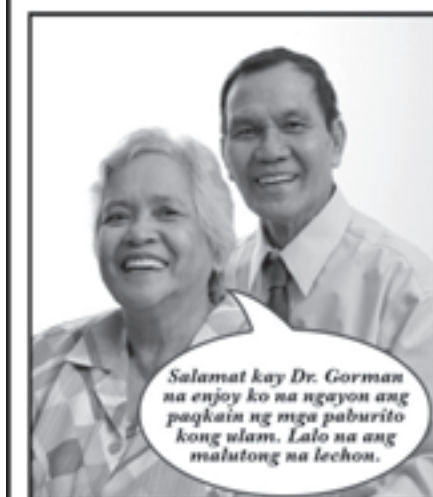
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