

Parliamentarians to tackle climate change

London, February 2005 -- In a major development, Prime Minister Tony Blair of UK challenged parliamentarians and business leaders from rich and rapidly-industrializing countries to do more to combat climate change.

“I have no doubt, whatsoever, that climate change is the greatest environmental challenge we face,” said Prime Minister Blair lending his support to a new initiative, the *G-8 + 5 Legislators and Business Leaders Climate Change Dialogue*. “The evidence of such change is now overwhelming. Without actions to curb greenhouse gas emissions experts predict that global average temperatures could rise by as much as 5.8°C and sea levels by 88 cm by the end of the century. Such change will dramatically alter our environment, our economies and our way of life.”

The initiative was launched by GLOBE and Com+ Alliance. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a founding member of the Com+ Alliance, a partnership that uses communications to advance sustainable development. GLOBE is a network of parliamentarians. The GEF helps developing countries minimize their ‘carbon footprint’ by reducing consumption of fossil fuels and promoting the use of clean and renewable energy.

“We welcome this new initiative,” said Leonard Good, CEO, Global Environment Facility. “Dialogue and communication are essential for mobilizing public opinion to meet the development challenges posed by climate change.”

The GEF is the principal financial mechanism for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the largest financier of renewable energy projects in developing countries including energy efficient lights, solar, wind, geothermal, biomass and small hydropower energy. In 14 years, the GEF’s clean energy portfolio has grown to more than \$2 billion in grants for projects with a total value of \$12 billion.

The initiative will bring together legislators from the G8 countries, as well as Australia, Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa and Spain, with international business and opinion leaders and civil society to generate understanding of the beyond Kyoto scenarios, and to discuss a 2012 climate change agreement. The dialogue series will shadow the formal G8 climate change process up to the year 2008, when Japan is expected to assume the presidency of the G8 countries.

In his message of support relayed during a February 24 press conference at the House of Commons, Prime Minister Blair said: “I am delighted that GLOBE, in partnership with the COM+ Alliance, has created a forum for legislators from the G8 and major emerging economies to discuss these important issues in an open and frank manner. Legislators have a crucial role in raising awareness, encouraging debate in their constituencies and, of course, holding their leaders to account.”

For more information, www.thegef.org/projects/Focal_Areas/climate/climate.html
www.complusalliance.com

To read Tony Blair's message of support, click here...