

Climate

Key decision postponed

Marathon talks end with 'no deal' on carbon mkts

MADRID, Dec 15, (AP) — Marathon international climate talks closed Sunday with negotiators postponing until next year a key decision on global carbon markets.

After two weeks of negotiations on tackling global warming, delegates from almost 200 nations passed declarations calling for greater ambition in cutting planet-heating greenhouse gases and in helping poor countries suffering the effects of climate change. But despite holding the longest climate talks ever in 25 nearly annual editions they left one of the thorniest issues for the next summit in Glasgow, in a year's time.

Environmental groups and activists accused the world's richer countries of showing little commitment to seriously tackling climate change.

Among the early documents to be passed was the "Chile-Madrid Time for Action" declaration calling on countries to improve their current pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. That is needed to come in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement target of avoiding a temperature increase of more than 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century.

So far, the world is on course for a 3- to 4-degree Celsius rise, with potentially dramatic consequences for many countries.

Countries also agreed to designate funds for the most vulnerable countries to compensate them for the effects of extreme weather events, one of the most pressing issues for small island states and other developing nations.

But environmental groups and activists accused the world's richer countries of showing little commitment to seriously tackling climate change.

Struggle

"The Paris Agreement may have been the victim of a hit-and-run by a handful of powerful carbon economies, but they are on the wrong side of this struggle, the wrong side of history," said Jennifer Morgan, Greenpeace International's executive director.

"Climate blockers like Brazil and Saudi Arabia, enabled by an irresponsibly weak Chilean leadership, peddled carbon deals and steamrolled scientists and civil society," she said.

Chile chaired the talks, which had to be quickly moved to Madrid amid violent anti-government protests back home. Despite the pressure to deliver a positive outcome, activists criticized the Chilean government of President Sebastian Piñera for holding on to coal-fired power plants until 2040.

Carbon markets, which economists consider key in providing incentives for the world to move toward low-carbon growth models, remained one of the thorniest issues, and one that was set to be left for next year's discussions in Glasgow.

Setting a price on emissions of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, the markets allow countries or companies to trade emissions permits that can be steadily reduced — encouraging the uptake of low-emission technologies.

Europe and other countries had said that no deal on how to govern the exchange of carbon credits was better than one that could undermine a dozen or so existing regional mechanisms.

Efforts

The talks have been accompanied at times by angry protests from indigenous and environmental groups, both inside and outside the venue. The demonstrations reflected growing frustration, particularly among young people, at the slow pace of government efforts to curb climate change.

Helen Mountford from World Resources Institute, an environmental think-tank, said the talks "reflect how disconnected country leaders are from the urgency of the science and the demands of their citizens in the streets."

"They need to wake up in 2020," she added. Later Saturday, Chilean diplomat Andrés Landerretche told reporters that a fresh compromise would be circulated Saturday afternoon, but insisted that there would have to be trade-offs if there was to be a deal supported by all countries.

"It's impossible to have a consensus outcome if you don't compromise," he said.

Asked whether some decisions might be postponed until next year, Landerretche said: "We don't foresee any suspension. We are working with a view toward finishing our work today."



Pinera



A view of the Arab Health exhibition.

Health

30% of people treated in a controlled environment

Arab Health to address asthma prevalence

DUBAI, Dec 15: Arab Health, the largest exhibition for healthcare and trade professionals in the MENA region, will address the growing prevalence of asthma in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions as part of the 4th annual Emergency Medicine Conference, which takes place on the opening day of the trade show on 27 January 2020.

According to research from the Global Asthma Network, some 339 million people, or one in 20 globally, are affected by the condition. Often referred to as a Chronic Respiratory Disease (CRD), it causes airways to restrict and often results in coughing, wheezing, tightening of the chest, shortness of breath and generally difficulty breathing. In the UAE, approximately 14% of the population is impacted, equating to 1.3 million residents.

Speaking ahead of the Emergency Medicine conference, Dr Saleh Fares, Consultant of Emergency Medicine, EMS and Disaster Medicine, Founder and President, Emirates Society of Emergency Medicine (ESEM), Dubai, and moderator of the respiratory session, said:

"CRDs are increasing in prevalence in the Middle East and, unfortunately, are often left undiagnosed and untreated. This is having huge social and economic consequences and, in some instances, is resulting in death. With the correct diagnosis and treatment, the number of deaths can be dramatically reduced, and the impact of the condition lessened."

"We need to ensure there is better access to treatment and educate both front-line medical staff, as well as the patient, about the symptoms and the best course of action to take to remedy the condi-

tion," he added.

The UAE's above-average number of asthma cases is often attributed to the UAE's dusty conditions due to the desert environment as well as seasonal changes and the resulting increase and decrease in temperature and humidity. A reliance on air conditioning in the home and office, if not properly cleaned, can also become the ideal breeding ground for mould and dust which can act as a trigger for some sufferers.

According to Dr Danish Sami, Consultant, Emergency Medicine, Sheikh Shakhboub Medical City (SSMC), Abu Dhabi, who will outline the factors contributing to the region's asthma problems as part of his session titled Asthma Exacerbation in 2020: "The issue we face is that only 30% of asthma sufferers are treated in a controlled environment. Similarly, only 30% are either partially controlled, and 40% have no diagnosis and therefore no treatment."

Exercise

There is still a need for education, particularly with children, who we need to encourage to exercise more to help negate the impact of asthma, however steps taken within the education system and health authorities are helping to address these issues."

According to the latest research from UN Comtrade 2019, the UAE has seen a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) increase of 14.92% from \$19.6 million in 2015 to \$34.1 million in 2018 in the product categories of therapeutic respiration apparatus, ozone, oxygen and aerosol therapy apparatus; and artificial respiration or other therapeutic respiration apparatus.

The bulk of therapeutic respiration apparatus imports by the UAE come from the United States, China, Japan and Germany — all countries that will be present at Arab Health 2020 and showcasing their latest technology in this field.

Ross Williams, Exhibition Director of Arab Health, said: "As part of our commitment to provide access and information about the most up-to-date solutions and medical devices to the region, we will host over 250 companies who will be showcasing the latest technologies related to respiratory and life support. Products and services will include ventilation solutions, oxygen and nebuliser masks as well as ventilation units and ICU ventilation from companies including Dräger, Hamilton and Polybond India."

In addition to the Emergency Medicine Conference, a total of 13 Continuing Medical Education (CME) conferences and one educational forum will take place during the four-day Arab Health Congress. More than 5,000 delegates are expected to attend popular returning tracks including Obs & Gynae, Diabetes and Total Radiology, as well as eight new conferences that include: Midwifery, Patient Experience, Physical Medicine, Rehabilitation & Sports Medicine, and a Healthcare Investment Forum, amongst others.

Organised by Informa Markets, an anticipated 4,250+ exhibitors from more than 64 countries and 55,000 visitors are expected to attend the 2020 edition of the show which takes place from 27 – 30 January 2020 at the Dubai World Trade Centre and Conrad Dubai Hotel.

— See Also Page 17



In this Oct 22, 2019 file photo, a two-year-old alligator is held by a tourist at an airboat ride tour company on the Tamiami Trail just north of Everglades National Park, Fla. Louisiana is suing California over the state's decision to ban the import and sale of alligator products, saying the ban will hurt an important state industry and ultimately could hurt the state's wetlands. (AP)

Discovery

Thunberg apologizes: Teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg has apologized for saying politicians should be put "against the wall" after critics took it to mean that she was advocating violence.

The 16-year-old Swede made the comment in a speech to young activists in the Italian city of Turin on Friday.

Thunberg later said she was making a literal translation from Swedish, in which the expression means to put someone on the spot with tough questions.

"That's what happens when you improvise speeches in a second language. But of course I apologise if anyone misunderstood this," Thunberg wrote on Twitter on Saturday.

Thunberg told the crowd in Turin that world leaders were running away from their responsibilities to fight climate change.

"We have to make sure that they cannot do that," she said. "We will make sure they, that we put them against the wall, and that they will have to do their job and to protect our futures." The expression "putting someone against the wall" in Swedish describes a situation when someone is forced to address difficult questions or a difficult situation (AP)

Lawsuit over alligator ban: Louisiana is suing the state of California over its decision to ban the import and sale of alligator products, saying the ban will hurt an important Louisiana industry and ultimately could hurt the state's wetlands.

In a lawsuit filed Thursday, Louisiana said the economy surrounding alligators has played a key role in bringing back the American alligator population and is an important factor in protecting wetlands and other species besides alligators that depend on the wetlands.

"California has nevertheless attempted to destroy the market for American alliga-

tor products notwithstanding the fact that no such alligators live in California," the lawsuit says. According to The Times-Picayune/the New Orleans Advocate, California banned alligator skins and meats in the 1970s but repeatedly issued exceptions that allowed sales. The newspaper reports that the most recent exemption expires on Jan 1 of next year, and this time California's legislature did not pass another exemption. The newspaper reports the alligator ban was



Thunberg



Edwards

backed by a coalition of animal rights and environmental groups.

Louisiana, whose governor is John Bel Edwards, said in its lawsuit that because most of the state's coastal habitat is privately owned, the state does not have direct control over how it is managed. But the alligator industry provides economic incentives for landowners to take steps to protect marshlands that serve as habitat for the alligators. (AP)

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