

# Setting climate change targets will not save the world, warns Bjorn Lomborg

Setting new targets on reducing carbon emissions will do nothing to save the world from global warming, a leading environmentalist has warned as ministers meet at a landmark climate change conference.

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Almost 200 countries have gathered for a UN Climate Change Conference in Poznan, Poland, to decide on a replacement to the Kyoto Protocol.

The most pressing issue is seen as being whether the world can agree targets to reduce carbon emissions.

However, Bjorn Lomborg, professor at Copenhagen Business School and author of the *Skeptical Environmentalist*, said the meeting is focusing on the wrong area.

He said targets will be difficult to police, expensive to achieve and almost impossible to agree on.

Instead he said the world should be investing heavily in new technologies like carbon capture and storage, that stores carbon underground so that poorer countries like China can continue to burn coal without harming the environment.

"We need to reduce carbon emissions but this will not be done by setting unrealistic targets but by investing in research and development to encourage new technology," he said.

"The main problem is as long as it is expensive to cut CO<sub>2</sub> it is going to be uphill all the way and we will get people breaking promises rather than delivering. Instead we should be making cheaper technologies available so it is easy to make cuts.

"For example if solar panels were cheaper than fossil fuels we might get somewhere."

More than 100 ministers are gathering for the crucial final days of the conference when the issues of targets will be debated, alongside deforestation and adaptation to climate change.

In the past the US has been unwilling to commit to such cuts fearing it may cripple industry.

But environmentalists argue that unless powerful countries like the US sign up it will be difficult to persuade developing countries like China to cut emissions.

At the same time the EU is set to decide on a target to cut carbon emissions by 20 per cent by 2020.

It comes as a House of Lords report recommended that the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS), that has set up a carbon market where industries pay for the right to pollute, should be strengthened.

Meanwhile Hilary Benn, the environment minister, said in a speech that the world needs a global agreement on food security in the same way as the Kyoto Protocol brought countries together on climate change.

He says the agreement could ensure fair trade, affordable prices and supply of food.

Addressing the Fabian Society, Mr Benn said: "By 2050 there will be nine billion of us living on this small and fragile planet. And the question is: do we have the capacity to feed the equivalent of another two Chinas?"

"Global food production will need to double just to meet demand. We have the knowledge and the technology to do this,

as things stand, but the perfect storm of climate change, environmental degradation and water and oil scarcity, threatens our ability to succeed.

"The single most important step we can take is to agree a new climate deal in Copenhagen next year. And my message to all those gathering in Poznan this week to lay the foundations of that agreement is that we need it, not just to secure our climate, but also to secure our food and water for the future."

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