

**tcktcktck**

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### **Hillary breaks through the chatter**

Amid the cacophony in Copenhagen, a bright spot.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spoke to a packed press conference, pledging that the U.S. would help raise \$100 billion a year by 2020 in aid to developing nations to mitigate climate change effects.



*U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton*

Her words, despite the surrounding maelstrom of discontented protesters, developing nations worried about being marginalized and others who've declared the talks either stalled or in chaos, could help bring clarity as the historic summit lurches toward a close on Friday.

The pledge, which Clinton said would come from a mix of public and private money, including funds raised on the carbon market, speaks to both those negotiating on behalf of the other leading nations who want to see the U.S. put real money on the table, and to those in developing nations, many of whom doubt that the rich nations have the political will to put up a strong and well-funded fight against climate change.

The Danish Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen said the negotiating nations must now work as hard as they can to make final compromises.

NGOs and climate activists, some of whom have been concerned that poor, developing nations have been marginalized at the talks, expressed hope as well.

"We are heartened by Secretary Clinton's commitment to significant financial resources of \$100 billion dollars a year by 2020 to help developing countries weather the negative impacts of climate change," said David Waskow, a spokesperson for Oxfam International, which represents a collaboration of humanitarian groups.

“It is absolutely crucial that this funding come from public sources in developed countries and be additional to current development assistance commitments. Private financing is no substitute for public investment in the [aiding the] resilience of the poorest and most vulnerable communities.”

“If such public financing is put on the table, it could truly move us closer to a global deal on climate change.”

Frances Beinecke, president of the Natural Resources Defense Council, said Clinton’s remarks had “reenergized the talks here. What’s needed now is a meaningful agreement that delivers effective action on climate change. That means commitments to cut carbon emissions in a clear and transparent way.”

Other climate action groups were not as hopeful. Friends of the Earth and others wanted to know how much of the stated \$100 billion would come from public money, which some groups believe should be the main source of aid. The Center for Biodiversity noted that Clinton’s pledge is helpful, but the U.S. must reduce carbon emissions significantly as well.

“The U.S. may finally have pledged to help pay for more lifeboats, but without committing to meaningful emissions reductions, President Obama is still steering the Titanic directly toward the iceberg,” said Kassie Siegel, director of the Climate Law Institute of the Center for Biological Diversity.

Beyond Clinton’s pledge, there are other hopeful signs that the Copenhagen summit may not crumble before the approaching finish line:

- The talks continue on two tracks, one aimed at a new global pact on emissions reductions and climate financing crafted at Copenhagen, and the other pursuing ways to strengthen the existing Kyoto Protocol, which the developing nations (G-77) had worried would be abandoned.
- China has “not given up” hope for a deal, says its chief climate negotiator Yu Qingtai. Clinton though, told reporters that China would have to agree to “transparency” or outside verification as it pursues carbon emissions reductions.

“It would be hard to imagine, speaking for the United States, that there could be the level of financial commitment that I have just announced in the absence of transparency from the second biggest emitter — and now I guess the first biggest emitter, and now nearly, if not already, the second biggest economy,” Clinton said. “... So, if there is not even a commitment to pursue transparency, that’s kind of a dealbreaker for us.”

China is, indeed, now the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gas pollution, accounting for about 30 percent of global emissions.