



WORLD FEDERATION OF UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATIONS  
FEDERATION MONDIALE DES ASSOCIATIONS POUR LES NATIONS UNIES

*A peoples' movement for the United Nations*

**Submitted by:** Bonian Golmohammadi, Secretary-General, World Federation of United Nations Associations

**Date:** 9 December 2009

**Contact:** 212-963-5610, 212-963-0970, 212-963-5611, molnar@wfuna.org

### **Who Handles the Climate Money?**

In the event of a successful agreement at the UN Climate Change conference in Copenhagen that began on Monday, many governments will be offering significant amounts of funding towards climate action in poor countries. At their meeting in November, European leaders already agreed to contribute to a fund for helping developing countries combat climate change, with the contribution estimated to reach €100bn a year by 2020, with a proposed €5-7bn a year until 2012 to kick-start action. Such funding needs to be managed in a predictable, accountable and transparent way, by an experienced authority. The United Nations is a logical choice.

First, the UN has the scope and legitimacy that will enable financial flows to quickly open up to countries most in need and to be invested through well-managed programs with proven success rates. For instance, the UN Development Programme alone is on the ground in over 160 countries. With unparalleled in-country networks of staff and experts and with a broader network of development partners across the board, the UN is uniquely placed to ensure that climate change funds reach the areas where they are most needed, and are administered effectively.

Second, the UN has proven experience in managing such monies successfully. Under the modality of the UN Multi-Donor Trust Funds, the needed financial mechanisms are in place. The UN is already managing funds dedicated to achieving results internationally, such as the MDG Achievement Fund and the Peacebuilding Fund. Managing over \$4 billion in trust funds, the UN has proven itself as a leader in fund management.

Third, there is no time to waste, and the UN has the much-needed capacity for the rapid disbursement of climate funds. With the mechanisms that are in place now, the UN is able to fast track the flow of needed finance to help countries immediately begin to shift to low-carbon, climate-resilient development pathways. Undoubtedly, time is of the essence when it comes to climate change, and financial flows must be opened with efficiency and immediacy.

Finally, the UN has the expertise to take a development-based approach to the climate change challenge. Climate change, arguably one of the most significant challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, does now stand alone—it is intrinsically related to sustainable human development. Unless urgent action is taken to deal with the climate problem, decades of development progress and efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals will be undermined.

In terms of finance, the UN is certainly not without its deficiencies. There must be a move to increase efficiency and coordination across the system so that funds can be used more effectively and action can be implemented even more immediately. However, in spite of these shortcomings, the UN has had a remarkable track record and is certainly unparalleled.

The UN should not be the lone fund manager of climate resources. Rather, it needs to be a significant player in managing climate finance in conjunction with partners. The UN already has a history of successfully cooperating with organizations such as the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and would certainly continue to do so in the management of a climate change fund. This type of collaboration might have

the additional benefit of reducing existing tensions regarding the domination of the G20 in the decision making of the World Bank and GEF, by providing a partner -the UN- that represents nations big and small.

In light of the comprehensive nature of the climate dilemma, not to mention the complexity of our globalized world and the need for urgent action, there is no other system in place that is more adequate to serve as a governance mechanism for climate funding than the United Nations. In short, the UN should lead on some, be ignored on none.

As the issue is being discussed in Copenhagen, it is imperative that we encourage our government officials to propose solutions that will include the UN as a key component in the governance of climate funds. To deny the UN this role would be to the detriment of global society and a significant impediment to sustainable development

#####



**Bonian Golmohammadi** is the Secretary-General of the World Federation of United Nations Associations, a civil society organization representing national United Nations Associations (UNAs) in over 100 countries. Previously, Mr. Golmohammadi was the Secretary-General of the UNA-Sweden for eight years. Under his leadership, UNA-Sweden increased its budget from \$1 million to \$5 million, and tripled its full-time staff. Mr. Golmohammadi serves on various advisory boards for Swedish Ministers for Development, international development corporations, and civil society organizations. He is a member of the Swedish UNESCO Board. He was a representative on the Swedish government's delegation to the 2002 UN Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey. Prior to UNA-Sweden, Mr. Golmohammadi worked with private businesses in the Czech Republic, including a publishing trust and a real estate firm.