



5 May 2014 - “Climate change is the defining issue of our time. If we do not take urgent action, all our plans for increased global prosperity and security will be undone,” stated [Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#) in his [opening remarks](#) at the “Abu Dhabi Ascent”.

The SG and the United Arab Emirates Government are co-hosting this event which aims to prepare for and build commitment ahead of the [Climate Summit](#), set for 23 September in New York. More than 1,000 participants, including 100 Government ministers, have gathered in Abu Dhabi for the two-day event to chart new routes for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening climate resilience.

The “Ascent” is the first international meeting to draw on the conclusions of the recently issued [reports](#) from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which found the consequences of climate change are already being felt, and that while present action is insufficient, there are still pathways towards a low carbon future that could minimize the phenomenon's impacts.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that his summit in September will focus on solutions. It will

provide a high visibility platform for those who are ready to lead so they can invite others to follow. “I am inviting Heads of State and Government, along with mayors and senior representatives from business, finance and civil society, to join a 'race to the top,’” said the SG.

The assembly in Abu Dhabi is meant to be a building block ahead of the summit in September. Ban Ki-moon expects participants of the “Ascent” to return home with one important message, “climate action is feasible, affordable and beneficial. Change is in the air. Solutions exist. The race is on. It's time to lead”.

John Ashe, President of the UN General Assembly, also delivered opening remarks and warned that: “We have done too little for too long – we have ignored the growing scientific evidence and mounting risks at our own peril – we need to live with the knowledge that we may very well have completely altered the course of history for future generations by our years of collective inaction on climate change.

In his remarks the SG said that from the tropics to the poles, from small islands to large continents, and from the poorest countries to the richest, climate change impacts are already widespread, costly and consequential. “Our motto must be adopt and adapt. Adopt what works and adapt it for your nation, your business, your community,” the Secretary-General said, warning that “time is against us. Nature will not wait. The planet is sending us a message. We must listen.”

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