

New commitments and calls for compromise at COP10

Title Nagoya, 23:00 ? This morning the official "high-level segment" began with a video message by UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon followed by a dramatic appeal of four young people to the assembled politicians to show responsibility for the future of our planet during the the final three days of COP10. The arrival of the Ministers meant a new series of speeches, country by country, some with news of extra financing for biodiversity. It is normal practice at a COP for the host country to lead from the front by making a commitment. And Japan did not disappoint with the positive announcement from their Prime Minister Naoto Kan. A commitment of two billion US dollars for biodiversity in developing countries. It is a higher financial commitment than Angela Merkel made at COP9 in Bonn in 2008. Nevertheless It remains to be seen how much of this 2 billion from Japan will be made up of new and additional money rather than including their existing spend for biodiversity. Other Ministers made financial commitments, including the UK who announced a series of extra spending most significant of which is £100 million for forests over the next four years. All together, the announcements are not enough to break the deadlock on the overall finances being asked for by developing countries. Negotiations this evening have been sometimes thrilling, sometimes theatrical but mostly pedestrian. Some groups met last night until 4 AM. I'm writing tonight from the Finance Contact Group, with little progress forthcoming. I feel all the players need to meet simultaneously, including the NGOs. It is interesting that at COP10 you can speak with politicians every hour, compared to the norm of having to wait months for an appointment to come available. Today's meetings for me included spending an hour this morning with the French Environment Minister, in the afternoon with a director of the EU Commission, and in the evening with the EU Environment Commissioner himself. They need us for advice on what other parties are thinking and for our influence with them. I'm conscious of our responsibility. We want to make a success of this conference and know there must be some compromise shown by all stakeholders. But not of course at any price - and it is in this melting pot of negotiation and compromise that we all have to determine any new proposals being put on the table. The real issues here money the ABS report. The negotiations are ever desperate to seek compromise for the divergent views across the countries. Many negotiators must be very tired and working under duress and being directed with by their wider government back home. And the EU has a huge problem, always having to coordinate with all equality across the 27 parties. And the Environment Ministers from these countries always have to call back home to check in with their Finance Ministers... Meanwhile, I realise I have probably missed the last metro back to the hotel ...