

UN climate chief urges grassroots movement to curb emissions



The United Nations' climate change chief on Thursday urged people around the world to join in a 'global work party' this weekend that is part of a growing grassroots movement to curb greenhouse gases. More than 7,000 events to fight climate change will be held in at least 180 countries around the world on Sunday, with the day gaining massive support largely through 350.org, tcktcktck.org and other internet-based groups.

'I congratulate you on your work and I want to offer my personal support to the... Global Work Party,' UN climate chief Christiana Figueres said in a video message posted on tcktcktck.

'I urge you to continue your inspiring work. When citizens are inspired to take action, it is easier for governments to initiate real climate change action.' Figueres recorded the video message from the northern Chinese city of Tianjin, where a week of UN talks on trying to secure a global deal on tackling climate change remained in gridlock.

The talks, which are due to end on Saturday, are aimed at laying the foundations for progress at a UN climate change summit in Cancun, Mexico, next month.

But the conference has so far been unable to heal the deep rifts between developed and developing countries that led to the failure by world leaders to broker a binding deal in Copenhagen last year. Figueres said the Global Work Party could help push governments into making compromises in their efforts to forge a treaty.

'That is exactly what governments need to rally around urgently,' she said of the grassroots campaign. 'They need to be determined to arrive at compromises that move the world towards winning the battle against climate change.'

Events on Sunday will include tree planting, installation of solar panels, bicycle riding and planting of organic vegetables. Organisers are describing it as 'the most widespread day of environmental action in the planet's history'.

As part of the event, the Maldives president, Mohamed Nasheed, will install a set of solar panels on his roof. In China and India, more than 300 universities will join in a student clean energy competition.

In Afghanistan, students will plant hundreds of trees in a valley outside Kabul.