



90 International Companies Call for Action on Climate Change

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NEW YORK—Immediate action by the world's governments to mitigate the effects of [greenhouse gases](#) is essential to preserving the environment and the global economy, according to a joint statement released today by a group of more than 90 international companies.

“Addressing climate change will be a global action,” said Jeffrey D. Sachs, director of Columbia University’s Earth Institute at a press conference here. “This is an issue that requires action now, but it is an issue we won’t be able to solve immediately.”

The cost of reducing greenhouse gas [emissions](#) will be far less than the cost of the problems caused by the [effects of climate change](#), said several business representatives of the Global Roundtable on Climate Change, which includes companies such as Air France, General Electric and Volvo.

“The costs are smaller than people fear,” Sachs said.

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When asked why Volvo became involved in the agreement, Tomas Ericson, president of the Volvo Group, North America said, “As an industry, we are part of the problem, but we are also part of the solution.”

Companies were eager to participate, said Sachs, because they want uniform standards—if different countries and different states have individual rules, they become harder for businesses to follow. One example Sachs cited was that some power companies have wanted to [sequester carbon](#) emitted from burning coal, but local laws stipulate that they have to provide the cheapest [electricity](#) possible, so they can’t implement [new technologies](#) that would raise prices.

This call from businesses to establish uniform rules for emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases continues what Ginny Worrest, a senior policy advisor to Senator Olympia Snowe, told *LiveScience* was a “grassroots” effort to establish caps of greenhouse gas emissions [started by many states](#). Worrest said that such action on the part of business will help push Congress toward establishing federal regulations.

Federal lawmakers have so far resisted the idea of implementing a national cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gases. Separately last month, the chief executives of 10 major U.S. corporations [urged President George W. Bush](#) to support mandatory reductions in climate-changing pollution and establish reductions targets. No such action by the White House was taken.

“The politicians are unfortunately [behind the business community](#) on this,” Sachs said.

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While today's statement did not make specific recommendations as to [alternative energy technologies](#) that should be used or targets that should be reached, it emphasized the need of both developing and industrial countries to participate in a long-term agreement aimed at stabilizing the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, not just reducing emissions.

The statement did call for more research and development into possible future alternative technologies and for companies and governments to start using technologies that are already available, easiest of which is simply [conservation of energy](#), said Christian Nadal, president of Electricite de France, International North America.

More companies are invited to endorse the statement at www.grocc.org, and citizens all over the world can also sign on at www.nextgenerationearth.org.

The statement comes on the heels of [one issued last week](#) by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the largest science organization in the world. It said that "global climate change caused by human activities is occurring now and is a growing threat to society," Earlier this month the Intergovernmental Panel in Climate Change [issued a statement](#) that global warming will "continue for centuries" and is "very likely caused by man."

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