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## Rich nations miss U.N. climate finance deadline

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By [Alister Doyle](#), Environment Correspondent

OSLO (Reuters) - Rich countries have missed a U.N. deadline for outlining aid to help developing nations combat climate change.

Among industrialized nations, only Russia and Ukraine sent letters to the United Nations by the May 1 deadline -- only to say they did not feel obliged to contribute under a deal to provide almost \$30 billion in initial "fast-start" climate funds from 2010-12.

The lack of response is a setback to the deal, under which aid is meant to rise to \$100 billion a year by 2020.

"There are too many empty multilateral accounts," said Colin Beck, representative of the Solomon Islands at the United Nations.

"Developed countries continue to teeter in honoring even their modest commitments," said Clifford Polycarp, of the Washington-based World Resources Institute, which tracks climate aid pledges.

At a meeting of almost 200 nations in Cancun, Mexico, in December, industrialized nations agreed to give details of their first fast-start funds by May 2011 as part of a wider deal that included a plan to set up a Green Climate Fund.

The website of the U.N. Climate Change Secretariat, which oversees commitments, only has letters from Moscow and Kiev. It spells out that it interprets "by May" to mean "by May 1."

But deadlines set by U.N. agencies are often flexible and rich nations are expected to submit details soon, Polycarp said.

The cash is meant to help developing nations curb their rising greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, ranging from more droughts to rising sea levels.

But developed nations face problems in keeping pledges for 2010-12 aid, which now add up to about \$30 billion. Japan is hardest hit, after the March earthquake and tsunami, while the United States and many others face budget cuts.

Rich nations promised new and additional climate funds at a 2009 summit in Copenhagen, and repeated the pledge in Cancun. Rich nations have done most to cause global warming, by emitting most greenhouse gases since the Industrial Revolution.

Beck said the uncertainty about the funds "summarizes the fragile trust and confidence that emerged from Cancun."

An international report this week said seas could rise by more than previously expected, up to 1.6 meters (5ft 3in) this century, a big worry for coastal communities and island states from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean.

The Cancun Agreements included a goal of limiting a rise in average world temperatures to below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6F) above pre-industrial times. Temperatures have already risen by about 0.7 degrees Celsius (1.1 F).

(Editing by [Janet Lawrence](#))

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