Germany pledges support for developing countries at Petersberg climate meeting

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Germany says developing countries need more help to meet the climate change targets agreed to in Paris. The government is presenting a new support initiative at a two-day climate meeting in Berlin.

Germany's Environment and Development Ministries on Monday announced plans for an implementation partnership to help poorer countries transform their national climate action plans into concrete strategies. The initiative is to be unveiled at the two-day Petersberg Climate Dialogue, which got underway on Monday in Berlin.

The German ministries told newspapers of the Funke media group that the new partnership initiative aimed to provide developing countries with speedy access to customized advice in areas such as the construction of renewable energy projects, sustainable urban development and agriculture.
They said the program would better coordinate existing donor programs and that they hoped it would begin operation at the next UN Climate Change Conference in Marrakesh, Morocco, in November.

'Rapid implementation of Paris Agreement needed'
Federal Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks told ministers from 35 countries at the meeting in Berlin that the Paris Agreement on climate protection strategies needed to go into force rapidly.
"We want to facilitate the quick implementation and also bring the agreement to life in a legal sense," she said.

The international community pledged last December at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris to limit global warming to below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) compared with preindustrial times. The agreement was hailed as a major breakthrough after two decades of wrangling between rich and poor countries.

However, plans put forward by individual states to curb climate change would need to be ramped up in order for the targets to be met.
Hendricks said it was time for countries not only to make good their climate protection pledges, but to think about increasing their contributions.

Catastrophic impacts
Increasing temperatures have already been linked to a number of devastating events. Droughts in Africa and Asia are threatening food supplies, and rising seas could force millions to seeking higher ground. 2015 was by far the hottest year on record, and scientists predict that 2016 could be even worse.
"Climate change is driving millions of people from Africa's drought-stricken regions and the coastal areas of Asia," Development Minister Gerd Müller said ahead of Monday's meeting. "We can only create a world without hunger and poverty if we all effectively promote climate protection."

The Petersberg Climate Dialogue has been held annually in Berlin since 2011 and aims to prepare for the official summits in the hope that they will proceed more smoothly. German Chancellor Angela Merkel is scheduled to speak at the meeting on Tuesday.