



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on February 19, 2010

Top UN Climate Official Resigns

The top United Nations climate official is resigning. Yvo de Boer, executive director of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), announced he will leave his position as of July 1, 2010, a month before his term was scheduled to end.

According to an FCCC [press release](#), de Boer will join the consultancy group KPMG as Global Adviser on Climate and Sustainability. KPMG, a global network of tax and auditing firms, says de Boer "will have an international role working with KPMG member firms in advising business, governments and other organization on sustainability issues."



But media reports indicate that de Boer's resignation may involve more than simply moving on to greener pastures. Accompanying his announcement was de Boer's complaint, "Copenhagen did not provide us with a clear agreement in legal terms." [The Globe and Mail](#) quoted de Boer as having said he was "depressed for weeks" over the Copenhagen Accord, describing it as a "vague, non-binding agreement among major emitters."

In an interview with [Russia Today](#), Pat Michaels, Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute, was more explicit. "He certainly presided over the failure at Copenhagen when no substantive climate agreement came out. He cried on the podium," said Michaels. "Who runs away from a victory?" he continued, "I think de Boer is recognizing he is playing in a poker game where he's got bad cards."

There are mixed feelings as to how the resignation will affect upcoming climate-change negotiations scheduled for November in Cancun, Mexico, where delegates will try to pick up the pieces of the [Copenhagen debacle](#). Some worry that without de Boer's strong, high-profile leadership there is little chance of reaching any solid climate agreement this year. When asked about his predictions for Cancun, Michaels opined, "Cloudy with a chance of nothing." The UK's Energy and Climate Change Secretary, Ed Miliband, issued a statement saying, "We must quickly find a suitable successor, who can oversee the negotiations and reform the UNFCCC to ensure it is up to the massive task of dealing with what are some of the most complex negotiations ever."

Miliband's "reform" comment is indicative of the harsh criticism de Boer has fielded since Copenhagen, prompting others to view his resignation as a positive sign. Steve Howard, CEO of The Climate Group, a non-profit advocate of low-carbon economies, said, "A change of leadership in the UNFCCC provides a fresh opportunity to re-energize international negotiations ahead of the UN climate summit in Mexico in December."

Meanwhile, climate change skeptics continue to [call for the resignation](#) of another top UN official, Rajendra Pachauri, chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). de Boer firmly defends Pachauri against criticism over [Climategate](#) and related [erroneous data](#) included in the IPCC's highly influential 2007 climate change report. "Asking him to ... resign is senseless," countered de Boer



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in a (now ironic) interview with [Hindustan Times](#). "I hope he doesn't resign. He would be a fool to do so."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has yet to announce who he will appoint as de Boer's successor.

Thumbnail photo of Yvo de Boer: AP Images



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