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Little Progress Made at UN Climate Change Conference

October 29, 2009 08:29 PM

U.N.-sponsored talks on climate change ended early Saturday with little progress made on efforts to further curb emissions of so-called greenhouse gasses, believed to cause global warming. However, the United States and European Union agreed to meet again in May for informal climate discussions.

Participants in the two-week conference on climate change in Buenos Aires had hoped to make progress in determining what plan might succeed the Kyoto Protocol, which requires most industrialized countries to make specific cuts in greenhouse gas emissions by 2012. The accord takes effect in mid-February.

Paula Dobriansky	The European Union insists that any future climate agreement must include the United States. However, U.S. delegation chief Paula Dobriansky, U.S. undersecretary of state for global affairs, argued it would be premature to negotiate for after 2012.
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The Clinton administration signed the 1997 Kyoto pact, but the U.S. Senate never ratified it. In 2001, shortly after taking office, President Bush withdrew from the treaty, saying it would harm the U.S. economy. Instead, Mr. Bush has promoted long-term U.S. efforts to develop cleaner-burning energy technologies.

Early Saturday, the United States and the European Union agreed on a meeting in May for informal talks on the global climate.

But Pieter van Geel, Dutch Environment Secretary, says the urgency of the matter means more must be done.

"We have the reports on the Arctic, we have reports in Patagonia, we have a lot of reports, everything shows that climate is changing at a fast rate, and everyone

asked that we have to do something, and we all know that what we agreed in Kyoto will not decrease the emission of CO2, so we have to do more," said Pieter van Geel.

In addition to worries about the impact of emission cuts on the U.S. economy, the Bush administration wants any future accord to include rapidly developing countries like India and China. Although the United States is the world's largest producer of greenhouse gas emissions, China is projected to surpass U.S. emission levels by 2025.

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The UN Climate conference has concluded in Buenos Aires with the United States and the European Union reaching a compromise agreement regarding climate meetings next year. Officials at the conference say the two sides agreed to meet in May for what has been described as an "informal exchange of information" regarding climate change. Observers in Buenos Aires say the United States and the European Union had clashed during the two-week conference over how future...

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Scientists are warning that a long-term temperature increase of more than two-degrees Celsius would have dangerous consequences for global climate systems. Meeting at a U.N. sponsored climate conference in Argentina Tuesday, a group of European experts said such an increase could threaten Latin American water supplies, reduce food yields in Asia and increase extreme weather conditions in the Caribbean. Most scientists agree that global temperatures have already...