

# **Kerry blasts climate change deniers**

Climate change may be the world's "most fearsome" weapon of mass destruction and urgent global action was needed to combat it, US Secretary of State John Kerry said on Sunday, comparing those who denied its existence or questioned its causes to those who once insisted the Earth was flat.

In a speech to Indonesian students, civic leaders and government officials in Jakarta, Kerry laid into climate change skeptics, accusing them of using bad science and disingenuous scientists to undermine measures needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the risk of imperiling the planet. He argued that every member of every country had to take responsibility and act immediately.

"We simply don't have time to let a few loud interest groups hijack the climate conversation," he said, referring to what he called "big companies" that "don't want to change and spend a lot of money" to downplay the risks. He later singled out big oil and coal concerns as the primary offenders.

"We should not allow a tiny minority of shoddy scientists and science and extreme ideologues to compete with scientific facts," Kerry told the audience gathered at US Embassy-run cultural center @america in Central Jakarta. "Nor should we allow any room for those who think that the costs associated with doing the right thing outweigh the benefits.

"The science is unequivocal, and those who refuse to believe it are simply burying their heads in the sand," Kerry said, as quoted by The Associated Press. "We don't have time for a meeting anywhere of the Flat Earth Society."

Aides quoted by Reuters said Kerry had chosen Indonesia for the first of what was to be a series of speeches on the topic this year partly because as an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, it was particularly at risk from rising sea levels.

"Because of climate change, it's no secret that today, Indonesia is one of the most vulnerable countries on Earth," Kerry said

The US' top diplomat gave a litany of recent weather disasters, particularly flooding and typhoons in Asia, and their impact on commerce, agriculture, fishing and daily living conditions for billions of people.

The solution, Kerry said, was a new global energy policy that shifted reliance away from fossil fuels to cleaner technologies. He noted that US President Barack Obama was championing such a shift and encouraged others to appeal to their leaders to do the same.

The speech came a day after Kerry won an agreement with China to cooperate more closely with the US on combating climate change. American officials hope that will help encourage other nations, including developing countries like Indonesia and India, to follow suit.

Kerry was in Indonesia on the last leg of a three-nation tour of Asia that started in South Korea. After leaving Indonesia on Monday, he will travel on to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.

During Kerry's stay in Jakarta, he is scheduled to meet Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa on Monday, as a part of his role to lead the fourth Joint Commission Meeting under the comprehensive partnership between Indonesia and the US.

Before giving his climate speech on Sunday, Kerry toured the Istiqlal Mosque, one of the largest in the world, to pay his respects to the country's Muslim-majority population.

Kerry spent about 20 minutes touring the mosque, chatting briefly with women studying Islamic law and admiring the blue ceiling of its dome. Having removed his shoes in keeping with Islamic custom, Kerry at one point was shown a gigantic, skin-covered drum, which rests sideways on the mosque's floor and stood several feet taller than his head.