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U.N. climate panel seeks to engage with investors

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By Laura MacInnis

GENEVA (Reuters) - The United Nations climate panel, which won the Nobel Peace Prize last year, said on Thursday it plans to work with corporate leaders and investors to flesh out the business risks linked to global warming.

With its next major "synthesis" report not due until 2014, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will focus now on renewable energies and also engage with companies about the dangers of a warming planet and ways to confront it.

Ottmar Edenhofer, co-chairman of a IPCC working group, said pension funds were keen to hear which sectors and countries are most threatened by climate change, a phenomenon the panel's scientists have linked to the burning of fossil fuels like oil.

"Their investment decisions depend heavily on that," he said, referring to pension fund managers. "The business community, the investors' community, is really interested."

An IPCC report on the risks and potential of renewable energy technologies is in the works for 2010, Edenhofer added.

IPCC Chairman Rajendra Pachauri dismissed worries a slowing world economy would eclipse concerns about global warming, which the U.N. panel has said will cause more extreme storms, floods, drought, and rising sea levels, among other disasters.

"There is a perception of the public, every time there is an extreme event, to link it to human-induced climate change," he told journalists in Geneva, where the IPCC met this week.

"I don't think there is any danger of this being driven off the radar screen of decision makers and the public at large," Pachauri said.

The IPCC, set up in 1988, has decided to use its money from the Nobel prize, which it shared with former U.S. Vice President Al Gore, to help support scientists and researchers in the developing world.

It is currently seeking supplemental financing to help set up a revolving fund for that purpose, the chairman said.

(Editing by Sue Thomas)

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