

COPENHAGEN (AFP) - Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen on Sunday defended the much-criticised climate deal that was agreed at a UN summit in Copenhagen, saying it was "better than nothing."

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The outcome of the summit which Denmark hosted was "not a bad result," Rasmussen told television channel TV2.

"We were able to bring to the same table the United States, China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Europe, poor countries and small islands to agree a deal in Copenhagen," the Danish premier said.

The Copenhagen Accord, only passed by a procedural motion after two weeks of tense negotiations, has been widely condemned as a backdoor deal that excludes the poor and dooms the world to disastrous climate change.

The non-binding agreement was assembled by the leaders of the United States, China, India, Brazil, South Africa and major European nations, after it became clear the 194-nation summit was in danger of failure.

The summit set a commitment to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit), but did not spell out the important global emissions targets for 2020 or 2050 that are the key to holding down temperatures.

It also promised 100 billion dollars for poor nations that risk bearing the brunt of the global warming fallout, but has not given a fixed payout plan.

Criticised climate deal 'better than nothing'

Written by AFP / The Swedish Wire

Monday, 21 December 2009 11:11 - Last Updated Monday, 21 December 2009 16:49

"An agreement is better than nothing," Rasmussen said.

The Danish prime minister said the summit would have failed if leaders had not come to the rescue.

"Without the intervention of heads of state, there would not have been an agreement," he said. "Before their arrival, the negotiators were at an impasse."

"When the leaders arrived, there was not even a framework agreement to discuss and we had 24 hours, which is too little time, to create a text which should have been negotiated during the two weeks of the conference," he said.