Barack Obama has six months to deliver on the promises he made in a rousing speech at the United Nations climate change summit, Europe's climate action commissioner said.

Obama, in a well-received address on Tuesday, promised the United States would play a leading role in reaching an international agreement to fight climate change, due to be finalised in Paris at the end of next year.

Connie Hedegaard, who is responsible for ensuring the European Union meets its climate change obligations, told the Guardian that after the president's speech raised expectations, other countries, especially the rising economies of China, India and Brazil, will be looking closely at what the US has to offer in six months.

Governments have set a deadline of March 2015 to spell out what they are prepared to offer for a new climate deal, including how far they will cut emissions. "It matters a lot what will come out of America in the first quarter of 2015, we should not be mistaken," Hedegaard said in an interview on Wednesday.

More...