

Statement by Rt. Honourable Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal, Prime Minister of Nepal at the High-Level Segment of the Copenhagen Climate Conference (COP15)

16-18 December 2009, Copenhagen, Denmark

Madam President

Excellencies - Heads of State and Government

Secretary General of the United Nations

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Conference on climate change has special meaning for us. We held a Cabinet meeting two weeks ago at Kalapatthar (5,542 mt), the Base Camp of Mt. Everest. I saw up close from the top of the world the alarming impacts of climate change in the Himalayan Region. The Cabinet Meeting came out with a 10 point Everest Declaration on Climate Change which includes expansion of protected areas from current 20% to 25% and increased forest cover area up to 40% of the total land of the country. Last week hundreds of people from around the world, including many great mountaineers who have marched through the streets of Copenhagen in a "Summiteers' Summit to Save the Himalayas". We also hosted a high level regional conference on climate change in Kathmandu in August. All these events reconfirm our strong commitment to address climate change.

The message from these events, and from the people of Nepal, I bring to you today is this: Let us keep our planet Earth green, so that we can keep the majestic Himalayas, the Alps, and the Andes eternally white under the snow. If we fail to act now and act decisively, not only will future generations be deprived of experiencing the beauty of the white mountains, but also the livelihoods of over 1.3 billion people residing in the great river basins of the Himalayas will be seriously affected. We all have recognized that the Himalayas is the third pole and the water tower of South Asia. The temperature in Nepal is increasing at a rate much

It is a acknowledged fact that Nepal has 8 out of 10 highest peaks of the world.

higher than the global average. This in the long term would also adversely impact the hydrological system of the entire region. Formation and outburst of glacial lakes are perhaps the most visible impacts of climate change. There are many such potentially dangerous lakes which could burst out any time causing massive damage to the lives and livelihoods of the people.

Global climate change is thus adversely affecting the fragile mountain ecosystem while endangering its great biodiversity. Therefore, they are among the early and most serious victims of its effect. This is not fair. We therefore, like to pursue our common problems together with other mountainous countries.

Madam President,

As a landlocked and least developed country with subsistence agriculture, Nepal faces many serious challenges in its fight against poverty and underdevelopment. Adaptation to the changing life support system and protecting our environment and natural resources from the negative impact of climate change are our new and additional challenge. Developed countries should commit for long term and substantially scaled up financial resources with special focus on the least developed countries in addition to the regular official development assistance. They should also support for development and transfer of technology and capacity building for the vulnerable countries on a priority basis.

Madam President,

We consider the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol the foundational instruments to deal effectively with this global challenge. We urge all countries to ensure effective implementation of these agreements, based as they are, on the principles of common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities.

We call on the developed countries to abide by their existing commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as already agreed

within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol. We urge this Summit Conference to set ambitious global goals and targets for Annex I countries to further reduce greenhouse gas emission.

Nepal is prepared to play its part. Already, we have developed one of the most successful community forestry programmes. Given our huge potential of hydropower, solar and wind energy, we can aspire to become a carbon neutral country in the long run. We can even contribute to lessen carbon emission in the region through the development of clean energy in Nepal. For that, we need substantial commitment in terms of resources and technology transfer.

Madam President,

I want to associate myself with the statements made by Sudan on behalf of G-77 and China, and by Lesotho on behalf of LDCs on this issue. As they have emphasized, our development objectives should not be undermined. The aspirations of the peoples of the Least Developed Countries to uplift themselves from the indignity of poverty, illiteracy and illnesses deserve extra global solidarity and we need to redouble our efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals

Let us make this Conference a milestone of hope and success, for our present and future generations to harness the bounty and beauty of our green planet with white snowy mountains, and pristine blue seas and skies.

I propose the following to make it a success.

1. Sustainable development and poverty alleviation with gender sensitivity should be our foremost priority in dealing with climate change issues.
2. We must have an ambitious and legally binding deal in Copenhagen following the Convention and Kyoto tracks. Developed countries should

have ambitious goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Atmospheric temperature should be kept below 1.5 degrees.

3. We must look to the future of our planet, but be conscious of our common but differentiated responsibilities.

4. LDCs and most vulnerable countries must be uppermost in our mind, as they are least able to withstand the adverse impacts of climate change.

5. We need predictable, substantially enhanced and long term finance with direct and easy access to resources and technology with an institutional framework and governance that caters to the interests and concerns of LDCs.

Thank you.

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