

22 November, 2000

Statement by Dr. G.R. Bhatta, Secretary
Ministry of Population and Environment, Nepal
To the sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate Change, The Hague, 13-24 November 2000.

Mr. President
Honorable Ministers
Your Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, let me take the opportunity to express sincere appreciation of my delegation to the Government of the Netherlands and the local government of The Hague for the excellent arrangements made for this Sixth Convention of Parties meeting.

Mr. President, we are also confident that under your able leadership, this meeting will be a grand success and shall fully achieve its objectives.

Mr. President,

At the outset, let me submit before this august gathering that being a mountainous country with a fragile ecosystem and difficult terrain, Nepal faces many challenges in her efforts for sustainable development which have been now further jeopardized by the impacts of global warming, the consequence of climate change. This also adds to the cost of carrying out response measures and make more difficult for us to implement different environmental programs in the country. As such external support to Nepal in mitigating climate change impacts is crucial.

I am happy to state here, Mr. President, that Nepal has been actively participating in most of the UN environmental conventions including the UNFCCC and has been fulfilling her obligations to the extent possible within our limited resources and capability. Basic institutional mechanisms and legislative framework related to promotion of environmental activities in the country are already in place. The national Environmental Protection council chaired by the right honorable Prime Minister of the country and responsible for overall coordination of the environmental activities in the country is operational since more than a decade. The environment protection act and other necessary regulations are also in place since 1996. Environmental Impact assessment of all infrastructure projects is being regularly carried out by the Ministry of Population and Environment. Concrete steps have already been initiated towards air pollution management. This is contributing towards reduction of emissions of GHGs into the surrounding

atmosphere. Activities towards preparation of national communications are also underway in the country with the support of Global Environment Facility.

As a Least Developed Country, our biggest challenge today is to alleviate poverty and to improve the living standards of our people. We, therefore, fully support and endorse all policies and programs designed to meet the objectives of sustainable development in developing and least developed countries through appropriate cooperative mechanisms and North-South cooperation.

Mr. President,

Nepal is endowed by nature with abundant water resources and has great potential to generate large amounts of renewable energy. Nepal's estimated hydro potential exceeds 80,000 megawatts. If exploited it could provide supply of billions of units of clean energy to support industrial growth and materialization of the objectives of emission free energy production and consumption not only in the country but also in the sub-region. A regional power grid interconnecting Nepal with her neighbors could serve best to the purpose. We therefore would like to propose to this meeting to consider hydro energy development as a very preferable instrument towards combating the problem of green house gases. To this end, Nepal remains seriously committed towards regional and global cooperation in promoting renewable energy resources of other forms as well.

Mr. President,

Nepal, as a member of G77 and China, fully supports the proposals forwarded on behalf of the Group and urges this Conference of Parties to favorably consider these proposals. In this context I would also like to draw the attention of this body towards proposals forwarded by the group of Least Developed countries at the end of the workshop held in Geneva last month to discuss the special situations of LDCs which remain most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. In this document the issues and interests of LDCs from Africa, Asia and others related to mitigation of possible climate change impacts have been put forward for the consideration of this conference. In this regard Nepal particularly looks for support for capacity building and technology transfer to enable the country to preserve the fragile mountain ecosystem, manage flood control and forest resources, mitigate possible outbursts of glacial lakes which are being formed rapidly in the high Himalays of Nepal due to melting of snow caused by gradual rise in atmospheric temperature. We also need support from the annex I countries for strengthening our environmental institutions.

Mr. President,

Nepal will welcome the country specific implementation of CDM projects in a manner that would protect and serve the interests of the country utmost.

Mr. President,

I am confident that this meeting will prove to be a milestone in finalizing and concretizing the global action programs on climate change in which flexibility for every country to play her appropriate role will be ensured.

Mr. President I would once again reiterate and assure this august gathering that His Majesty's government of Nepal shall leave no stone unturned to extend its best participation in all the climate change related activities envisioned by the UNFCCC.

I thank you once again Mr. President for this opportunity granted to us to express our views in this conference of global significance.