

Statement of
Her Excellency Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury
Minister for Environment and Forest
Government of the People's Republic Of Bangladesh.

Mr. President,
Mr. Executive Secretary,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of my delegation, I congratulate you, Mr. President on your election and the Bureau members as well for their election. I express my gratitude to the Government and people of Germany for hosting the fifth COP in this beautiful city of Bonn and for their warm hospitality.

Mr. President,
I come from a country, which is already a victim of climate change. In the recent past there has been a marked increase in the incidents of natural disasters like flood, drought, cyclones, tornadoes and tidal surges. Last year we have witnessed severe floods of the century that lasted for three months. It is feared that the occurrence of these calamities will be even more frequent.

The rise in sea level would increase the level of salinity in the coastal belt and this will have serious impacts on our economy. Under conservative estimates up to one fifth of the country would go under water. This means loss of land and loss of livelihood for about 20 million People. Many will be displaced permanently and will become ecological refugees.

As such the government and the people of Bangladesh take the problem of climate change very seriously.

Mr. President,
In November 1998 the Buenos Aires plan of action was adopted at COP 4, setting work plans and time tables for implementing the Framework Convention on Climate Change and laying the ground work for the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol.

Despite inadequacies and limitations, we believe that the protocol has created a new ground on which objectives may be approximated. We hope that the Bonn meeting would make progress towards implementation of the decision of COP 4.

Mr. President,

I would expect that Bonn meeting amongst others make effective progress in agreeing to the modalities for implementation of the article 4.8 and 4.9 of the convention.

Needles to say that there is a need and urgency for the special capacity building initiatives in the Least Developed Countries for vulnerability and adaptation assessments and in the design of mitigation projects for CDM.

I call upon the Parties to consider allocation of funds from GEF, especially earmarked for the Least Developed Countries for such needs as an interim measure.

I also propose to consider identification of urgent actions to meet the specific adaptation needs of the vulnerable least developed countries from the adverse effects of climate change, including the possible use of insurance and other appropriate mechanisms on a priority basis.

Mr. President

Per capita energy consumption in Bangladesh is around 60kg oil equivalents per year. Thus we are an insignificant contributor as far as global warming is concerned, yet we may have to pay a high price for which we are not responsible.

Mr. President

With the limited resources at our disposal and some help from the developing partners, we have done some amount of work on emissions inventory, vulnerability and adaptation assessments and in identification of mitigation projects.

However a lot is required to be done in all these areas which would warrant additional financial assistance from the GEF and our development partners.

Mr. President

It is our view that reduction of GHG emission by developing countries and the countries in transition has very limited scope, and that unless the

developed countries take more positive steps to reduce GHG emissions, all that we have tried to do both at Kyoto and Buenos Aires, may turn out to be futile.

The emphasis therefore is to be on 'Home Reduction' as 'Carbon Trading' will not really help in reducing the global emissions.

Mr. President

Climate Change has already started taking its toll in our livelihood and economy. Being a Least Developed Country we have limited resources and means to stand against adverse impacts of climate change including the colossal damage due to frequent flooding, tidal surges and cyclones.

I therefore, call upon the Parties in particular the industrialized countries to extend necessary support and cooperation in our continuing efforts to cope with the climate adversaries and struggle for survival

Mr. President and Distinguished Delegates,

I shall not prolong my statement any more .

On my own behalf and on behalf of the Bangladesh delegation, I express my sincere thanks to you for allowing me to say a few words on some of the issues that concern us most and wish under your dynamic leadership, this meeting would meet the expectation of the global community at large.

Thank you again Mr. President.