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Statement

by

H.E. Ms. Youngsook Yoo  
Minister of Environment  
of the Republic of Korea

at

the High-level Meeting  
of the 16th Conference of Parties to the  
UNFCCC

7 December 2011

Durban

Madam President of COP17, MAITE  
Nkoana-Mashabane (다이테 응코아나 마샤반),

Executive Secretary of UNFCCC, Christiana Figueres  
(크리스티아나 피게레스),

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address you on African soil. Taking this opportunity, I'd like to extend my deepest appreciation to the government and people of the Republic of South Africa for making this momentous conference possible.

My sincere thanks also go to the city of Durban for the detailed preparations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The marvelous nature of Africa inspires us of the importance to preserve it from the natural disasters human beings have caused.

We witness that the world has experienced the consequences of climate change with the recent severe floods in Thailand and drought and desertification in East Africa.

Korea was no exception. Last summer, we had experienced torrential rains for days and weeks, hoping for the never-ending rain to stop. However, nothing could be done. This reminds us of the greatness of Mother Nature.

In this context, it is my sincere hope that we produce a meaningful outcome during this conference in order to wisely respond to climate change and protect the Mother Nature.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Republic of Korea, I would like to highlight the balanced approach for meaningful advances during this negotiation.

To get into details, first, we should be able to reach a balanced outcome of the negotiations in both the Long-term Cooperative Action (LCA) and Kyoto Protocol (KP) tracks based on the Bali Action Plan.

We stress the need for the second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol in order to ensure that there will be no legal gap in the Post-2012 climate regime. In the mid-and-long terms, the international community should cooperate to establish a Climate Regime in which all countries participate to effectively respond to climate change.

Secondly, it is equally important to finish the task from COP16 held in Cancun in such areas as finance, adaptation and technology transfer and so on, in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

Thirdly, in particular, the Republic of Korea welcomes the report of the Transitional Committee on the Green Climate Fund. Korea wishes the successful adoption of the report here in Durban.

Korea views the GCF as an innovative and unprecedented kind of fund which will provide new opportunities to address climate change.

It is my great honor to express Korean's interest in hosting GCF, at this moment. As one of the new front runners in the green growth initiatives, Korea would like to continue to contribute to the global efforts to address climate change.

Ladies and gentlemen,

An effective response, to climate change needs to go beyond fragmented sectoral approaches towards a national vision and strategy.

In this regard, we stressed the importance of the establishment of each country's low emission development strategy stipulated in Copenhagen

Accord and Cancun Agreement as well.

In line with such international trend, the Republic of Korea declared in 2008 "Low Carbon, Green Growth" as the national vision and announced its mitigation goal of 30% below BAU level by 2020. Currently, Korea is keeping its voluntary promise to the world by establishing the greenhouse gas target management scheme and reviewing the introduction of emissions trade system.

Moreover, the Global Green Growth Institute, GGGI, was established in June, 2010 to share Korea's experience and efforts on "Low Carbon, Green Growth" with many countries.

Particularly, it is unique that in order to adapt to the climate change, Korea proceeded the Four Major Rivers Restoration Project which established the effective water management and flood prevention system so that it could effectively avoid flood damage in spite of torrential rains which exceeds the highest

precipitation within hundred years last summer, setting the 'good example of systematic water management' for developing countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

When the distinguished Nelson Mandela described South Africa as Rainbow Country in terms of its diversity in races, cultures, and languages, he wished that this diversity would be the source of unity rather than separation and division. His hope for unity in diversity was as pertinent then as it is now.

It can be observed that this conference, in a word, would be characterized by diversity in perspectives. This means that various positions within each group of this meeting were explicitly expressed in addition to the existing differences between developed and developing countries.

In this context, I'd like to stress the need for

unity rather than division, and the need for unity rather than uniformity. For unity's sake, we must stay focused on what matters most - fulfilling the objectives of Climate Change Convention.

Conflict is usually a sign that the focus has shifted to less important issues. It is my sincere hope that we are of one mind, united in thought and purpose.

For the unity of this conference in general, and for the unity of Asia-Pacific region in particular, Korea conceded Qatar the honor of hosting COF 18.

I wish that all of us demonstrate flexibility and a spirit of compromise to overcome the differences and reach a balanced outcome for our unity's and our planet's sake, looking forward to the shiny rainbow after the rain.

Ladies and Gentlemen, now is the time.



Thank you.

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