

Statement by the Head of Delegation of the Republic of Mauritius
at the High Level Segment of the UNFCCC COP18/CMP8
Doha, State of Qatar, 06 December 2012

Mr. President
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius, I would like to express our sincere thanks to the State of Qatar for its warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements for the organization of this high level meeting on Climate Change.

At the very outset, I would like to express the full support of Mauritius to the statements made earlier on behalf of the AOSIS, the Africa group and the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. President,

Important decisions were taken last year in Durban on how to urgently address the impacts of Climate Change. We now need to take concrete measures and actions to halt the rapid increase in greenhouse emissions and the pace of global warming. We trust that under your abled leadership, this Conference of Parties in Doha will come up with a positive and constructive outcome.

I will now focus my intervention on three issues:

First, the urgency to address climate change needs not be emphasized. Latest scientific reports, including findings from the UNEP Gap Emission Report 2012 and the World Bank Report, confirm the threatening impacts of climate change. The recent extreme climate events and observations also confirm that the impacts of climate change are worsening and this trend is most likely to accelerate in the near future. Mauritius as a highly vulnerable SIDS is already facing the devastating effects of extreme weather events. We are experiencing a decrease of about 8% in our annual rainfall, an average increase of 1 degree Celsius in air temperature, serious coral bleaching and an accelerating sea level rise at the rate of 3.8 mm per year that has been observed over the last five years.

The challenges ahead for Mauritius are huge, especially when considering the facts that water supply by 2030 may not be sufficient to satisfy projected demand, agricultural production may decline by as much as 30% in the medium term due to rainfall variability, the ecosystem and natural habitat of fish and other marine species are being rapidly degraded, and that several beaches, that are so important for the tourism industry may slowly disappear, thus severely undermining one of our major economic pillars

Recent studies conducted by international experts indicate that the damages to our basic physical infrastructure as a result of flood, landslide and coastal inundation would be over 50 million Mauritian Rupees yearly by 2070. This is a very conservative estimate.

Mr. President,

Our livelihoods are at stake. It would thus be irresponsible and insensitive on our part to further delay the long overdue responses. Strong carbon reducing government policies are therefore imperative. Constructive efforts are required by all parties to achieve the overall objective of limiting global warming to well below 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels by keeping atmospheric GHG concentration below 350 ppm.

Second is Mitigation. **Mr. President,** we have come a long way in the process and we have a strong hope that our developed country partners will take a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol. Those who are not a Party or who have indicated that they are not going to take a second commitment under the Kyoto Protocol will have to take comparable mitigation measures under the Convention. This is a must and not an option, if we are to save the world from the impending climate crisis. Allow me to underscore that the commitments by developed countries party must be scaled up to deliver emission reductions consistent with science and historical responsibility. As part of SIDS and Africa, we look forward to a clear response from our developed country partners. A low level of ambitions is not the option. A real demonstration of leadership from developed countries and solidarity with the most vulnerable states are more than ever required at this critical juncture.

Mr. President,

In response to this challenge, the Government of Mauritius has made sustainable development as its long term strategy. Several activities aiming at greening of our economy have been undertaken with our limited means under the Prime Minister's "Maurice Ile Durable" initiative known as "(MID)". Now we are also building a strong framework by way of a consolidated Policy, Strategy and Action Plan for sustainable development to happen, taking into account good governance and equity.

As such, Mauritius has set the target of achieving 35 % of renewable energy production by the year 2025. Necessary legislation has recently been passed on energy efficiency and on climate resilient and energy efficient buildings. Additionally, a series of other mitigation projects are also being undertaken. These include the promotion of solar water heaters at household level and the setting up of hydro units and new wind parks.

We are also well on our way with the implementation of our National Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Third, there is the urgent need of finance to meet the cost of adaptation. In this context, the early operationalisation and capitalization of the Green Climate Fund is a must. **Mr. President**, the cost for adapting to impacts of climate change is escalating rapidly. In spite of that, a number of measures aiming at reinforcing our water, food and energy security and protection of our environmental integrity are under way in Mauritius.

With the assistance of the Government of Japan under the Africa Adaptation Programme, Mauritius is putting in place the necessary institutional and legislative framework to enable adaptation in the key sectors of our economy. I seize this opportunity to thank the Government of Japan for supporting Mauritius in this endeavour. This Programme has enabled us to:

- (i) mainstream climate change and empower our vulnerable sectors to be prepared for climate related disaster management;
- (ii) prepare a Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy based on a disaster risk analysis in respect of flooding, landslide and coastal inundation due to surge and sea level rise;
- (iii) formulate a National Climate Change Adaptation Framework covering the key sectors of the economy, namely, agriculture, fisheries, tourism and water;
- (iv) set up a Climate Change Information System;
- (v) undertake capacity building of over 2500 professionals in climate change issues in the health, education, public infrastructure, agriculture, tourism and fisheries sectors, among others; and
- (vi) formulate a Climate Change Bill to enable Mauritius to adapt to climate change and move on greener, low carbon and climate resilient development pathway.

We have come up with a climate investment programme as part of our Climate Change strategy and action Plan. **Mr. President**, Mauritius needs the technical and financial support of the international community and development partners to pursue our adaptation programme.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we would like to reassure you of our determination to work with all parties for an outcome worthy of this testing and defining moment for the sake of our children and future generations.

I thank you, **Mr. President**.