



Statement made by Dr. R.D.S. Jayathunga, Director (Climate Change), Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy at the High Level Segment of 20th Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change (COP20) and 10th Session of the Conference of Parties serving as a Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, 01-12 December 2014 in Lima, Peru.

Mr. President of COP20 and CMP10
Executive Secretary of UNFCCC
Excellencies
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and gentlemen

Sri Lanka fully associates itself with the Statement made by the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group 77 and China.

It is indeed a great pleasure and a privilege for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. At the outset, let me extend our heartfelt greetings and well wishes to the Government and people of Peru for hosting and organizing this important conference in this historical, cultural and beautiful city – Lima, in an excellent manner, and also for their warm hospitality.

Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you, on your election as the President of the 20th Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and 10th Session of the Conference of Parties serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

Mr. President,

As a developing country and a tropical island nation, Sri Lanka is highly vulnerable to adverse effects of climate change. Changes of temperature, rainfall variation and sea level rise will directly impact almost all the sectors of the economy including agriculture, fisheries, livestock, water, forestry, biodiversity, health, coastal, human settlements, tourism, industry and transport. Occurrences of natural disasters due to extreme weather events such as droughts, flash floods, landslides and storms deprive lives and livelihoods of the people in Sri Lanka frequently.

Sri Lanka has already started experiencing the adverse impacts of climate change affecting its agriculture and threatening national level food security. Over the past few decades, the day and night temperatures of Sri Lanka has shown a slow but a continuous increase, where the night temperature has increased significantly compared to the day temperature. The high variability of rainfall experienced in the past decades has taken its toll in agriculture.

Saline intrusions due to sea level rise and storm surges are expected to increase with climate change. In coastal areas, surface and ground water has been affected restricting freshwater availability especially for drinking and agricultural purposes. Land, settlements and coastal infrastructure including housing, roads, and tourism infrastructure are highly vulnerable and seriously affected due to inundation of lands resulting from sea level rise.

Mr. President,

Considering the severity of the adverse impacts of climate change, Sri Lanka has taken several initiatives to build resilience of the country. Accordingly, Sri Lanka has formulated the National Climate Change Policy and prepared the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. In this context, we have conducted the Technology Needs Assessment to identify the appropriate technology to implement the climate change adaptation and mitigation actions in the country. We strongly believe in the transfer of technology to developing countries by developed countries to ensure that we are able to meaningfully address the issues of adaptation. Accordingly, Sri Lanka will require incremental additional financing, beyond current and ongoing expenditure, to implement the Climate Change Adaptation Actions in the country. Hence, it is imperative that the financing through the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund are agreed upon at the intergovernmental negotiations and made available without delay unconditionally, in order to implement the adaptation projects and programs aimed at reducing vulnerability and building resilience in the country.

Even though our per capita emission is still less than one ton, and it is insignificant in the global sense, Sri Lanka also has contributed and will contribute to global mitigation efforts. On the domestic front, Mr. President, I am glad to declare that Sri Lanka has launched several Climate Smart Initiatives.

Mr. President,

Developed countries must commit to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions as agreed upon for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol to avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change. Hence, we strongly urge to accredit the 2nd commitment period of Kyoto Protocol with higher level of aggregate emission reduction. Other developed countries, which are not parties to the Kyoto Protocol, also have to take their comparable commitments to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. President,

As you are aware, it was emphasized and reiterated by the Heads of States at the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012, that the world cannot achieve sustainable economic growth by following the strategies and methodologies employed by the industrialized countries in the 20th century and before. Therefore, it is necessary to have deep cuts in global GHG emissions by the developed countries considering the historical responsibility, and consequently to embrace the common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in order to keep the temperature increase below 2 °C in this century.

Our belief is that there is an over-riding legal duty of care owed by higher greenhouse gas emitters to the environment and developing countries, which are struggling to meet the basic needs of their inhabitants. This responsibility has to be acknowledged on an urgent to ensure that their emissions do not have a negative impact on the countries that are struggling to achieve their economic and social development goals.

Mr. President,

Our benchmarks for success in Lima are simple. Success must be marked by concrete and tangible results that implement the Convention and move this process forward, urgently with the special attention on the progress of Ad hoc Working Group on Durban Platform for Enhance Action on the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol.

As we look towards the future, we must not forget the past and the present. Parties must go beyond platitudes about the urgency of actions. Developing countries have done so and have pledged greater emission reductions through NAMAs. Although we recognize that some may have done more than others, concrete action is now required, particularly from those Parties who are historically responsible for creating the problem and who, owing to this historical responsibility, have long been committed to take the lead but have so far fallen short.

Mr. President,

Broadly, such concrete action includes having COP decisions in relation to the work of the ADP and the subsidiary bodies under which developed countries:

- 1) Show that they are finally taking the lead through scaled-up concrete actions to cut their emissions; and
- 2) Commit in concrete operational terms to provide substantial and tangible funding and technologies to developing countries through the bodies that have been set up under the Convention, its Protocol and the Bali Action Plan.

These in turn lay the basis of strengthening the mutual trust among Parties and for further enhancing the ability of developing countries to contribute to the global effort against climate change under the Convention in the context of their sustainable development. With this in mind, Mr. President under your esteemed leadership, the Sri Lankan Delegation expects the success of COP20 and CMP10 in Lima.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, allow me to express that it is Sri Lanka's fervent hope that for the sake of both present and future generations, this Conference of Parties in Lima, under your able leadership, would be possible to bridge the large attitudinal void that clouds this conference. We accordingly look forward to an uninterrupted second commitment period that will enable developed countries to cut down GHG emissions and assist the vulnerable countries to build the required level of resilience, thereby facilitate the fulfillment of the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol.

I thank you Mr. President