

STATEMENT BY THE GAMBIA ON BEHALF OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCS) GROUP AT THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (COP-18) AND THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES SERVING AS MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL (CMP 8).

(Doha, Qatar, 4 December 2012)

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Dear Colleagues

The Gambia has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Least Developed Countries Group.

I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as the President of the Eighteenth Conference of the Parties and the Eighth Conference of Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties of the Kyoto Protocol. We are confident that you will lead this process in an open, transparent and inclusive manner. To this end, we confirm our full cooperation and commitment in reaching desirable outcomes in Doha.

We associate ourselves with the statements made by Honourable Minister from Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 & China, the Honourable Minister from Swaziland on behalf of the African Group, and the Honourable Minister from Nauru on behalf of the Alliance of Small Islands Developing States.

We would also like to express our appreciation and gratitude to the Government and people of Qatar, for the warm hospitality and excellent facilities and thank the UNFCCC Secretariat for the excellent arrangements.

Mr. President,

The science is absolutely clear. If emissions are not lowered immediately, the opportunity to avert the worst impacts of climate change may be irrevocably lost. A series of recent scientific reports call for bold action as the world is on track for a 3°C to 5°C rise in temperature. The current pledges are grossly inadequate. However, the scientific analysis proves that a rise in temperature of less than 2°C – or even to 1.5°C – still remains technically and economically feasible. We know that this can be done only with a political ambition that is backed by rapid and immediate action.

Mr. President, Distinguished Colleagues and Delegates;

The LDCs represent only 12 per cent of the world's population but the impacts of climate-related disasters on these countries are over five times as much as the world as a whole. Since 1980, droughts, extreme temperatures, floods, and hurricanes have caused over 909,000 deaths in the LDCs. All these disasters call for nothing else but to speed up global action towards addressing a low-emission future where everyone has the chance of survival and sustainable livelihood.

Mr. President,

Honourable Minister,

Distinguished Delegates,

We understand that this years' negotiations in Doha are particularly challenging. We have planned to step out on a new path leading beyond 2020. However, in order for the new process to start we must first resolve unfinished business under the Bali Road Map, including the work of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and the Bali Action Plan for long term cooperative action. Decisions for the post 2020 regime must be guided by climate change science and impacts, the Convention's principles and provisions and, most importantly, by the lessons learnt under the current regime. There is no need to reinvent the wheel.

Mr. President,

The Kyoto Protocol is not only the foundation upon which our multilateral efforts to address climate change rests, it is also the sole legal assurance that we currently have to ensure actions will be taken. It is the only legally binding international agreement with quantifiable targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It has hard-won accounting rules and compliance systems negotiated over the last 20 years. It is also the cornerstone for any future climate change agreement. As such, continuity of the Kyoto Protocol is absolutely paramount for us.

Mr. President,

We appreciate the efforts made by some of under the Kyoto Protocol. preserving the Kyoto Protocol with similar arrangements imply adopting a 5-year CP2 to avoid locking-in insufficient ambition; getting Annex I Parties to move to the top of their pledged ranges by removing all conditionalities; limiting the carryover or

ensuring the removal of surplus Kyoto units; and applying provisional application of KP amendments decided in Doha.

We understand that there are a substantive number of disagreements on issues relating to CP2 between Annex I and non-Annex I Parties. We will engage constructively to narrow the differences.

Mr. President

The Parties must successfully conclude negotiations under the Bali Action Plan on long-term cooperative action, a huge but crucial task. We understand that the list of issues to be agreed under LCA is still long. Issues of paramount importance for us include adaptation, finance and technology for adaptation, capacity building, comparable mitigation commitments by Non- Kyoto developed country parties and means of implementation for our NAMAs.

Mr. President,

Current states of negotiations and progress achieved on finance for adaptation are disappointing and unsatisfactory. Here in Doha we must take necessary decisions for the full operationalization of the Green Climate Fund, including new and additional pledges to capitalize the GCF and take necessary steps to initiate arrangements between the GCF and the COP that will ensure effective accountability of the Fund to the COP.

Mr. President,

We also expect the developed countries to provide reassurance of the continuation of financial support to LDCs for adaptation is a prerequisite for Doha.

We are appreciative of the financial contributions and technical support of donors and encourage other Parties and organization in a position to do so, to contribute to the fund to enable the implementation of all NAPAs. It is gratifying to note that since the last council meeting in June, the total number of approved projects have increased from 64 to 84 and LDCs have accessed approximately USD370 million from the LDCF. As of 31st October, twenty-five countries submitted at least two projects while ten countries submitted three or more projects. This is a demonstration of the dedication and partnership between the LEG, the GEF, implementing Agencies and LDCs in ensuring that project implementation is expedited.

We appreciate the progress made on negotiations related to National Adaptation Plans but we still need clarity on the support for the NAPs process for the LDCs, particularly financial support for the formulation phase of the process and the launching of the NAPs process during early part of 2013.

We must also ensure the full implementation of the recommendations of the Co-Chairs of the Long Term Finance work programme and take stock of the lessons learnt from the Fast Start Finance process between 2010 and 2012 to ensure the effectiveness of the next financing regime under the Convention.

Mr. President,

Dear Colleagues

The group would like to thank the LEG and acknowledge their work on the technical guidelines for the national adaptation plans process; their identification of support needs for national adaptation plans process and their compilation of case studies on national adaptation strategies and plans.

Mr. President,

Under the current low-level mitigation ambition probable temperature increase would bring about widespread and for some existential threat of loss and damage to our countries. In more and more cases, adaptive capacity is already strained today. Given the expected scale of the loss and damage challenge, and its linkages to the international progress on mitigation and adaptation, LDCs are of the view that a strategic, permanent, more institutionalised and coherent response is required. An international mechanism would work as an umbrella for activities required on different levels and would perform the key functions required for an adequate response.

Mr. President,

Dear Colleagues

The new Durban Platform we launched in Durban further acknowledges that climate change is progressing so rapidly, and the current and expected impacts are so alarming, it is absolutely critical that all Parties immediately engage in the crisis and begin a serious negotiations about how our countries can specifically begin reducing emissions to the levels science shows is required to avoid a catastrophe. The process also demands leadership at the highest level for a new regime that

brings all of us together in multilateral legal system under the Convention. Doha is expected to deliver two work plans addressing the pre 2020 ambition Gap and elaborating work plan that contains work streams on adaptation, mitigation, finance, technology, capacity building and transparency of action and support, for progressing negotiations on a new Protocol under the Convention, to be adopted in 2015 at the latest.

Mr. President,

This meeting in Doha is our last chance to agree on the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol and put forward a new vision and plan to reverse the climate change course. Let us underscore our commitment to work towards a successful outcome during the next 72 hours

Thank you, Mr. President.