

**Statement of the Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Sri Lanka to the
18th Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework
Conference on Climate Change and 8th Session of the Conference of Parties
serving as a Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.
26th Nov - 7th Dec 2012 – Doha, Qatar**

Mr. President of COP18 and CMP8
Executive Secretary of UNFCCC
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the Government of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. At the outset, let me extend our heartfelt greetings and well wishes to the Government and people of Qatar for hosting and organizing this important conference in this beautiful city-Doha 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 18th Session of the Conference of Parties to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and 8th Session of the Conference of Parties serving as a Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

Mr. President

Excellencies , Ladies and Gentlemen,

The high variability of rainfall due to climate change will adversely affect agricultural production especially rainfed paddy cultivation which is the staple food of our people. The dry zone, where nearly 70% of the paddy is cultivated, is already showing increasing number of consecutive dry days due to rainfall variability. Approximately 48,000 ha which is 12% of the total cultivated paddy-lands have been affected due to drought condition prevailing in the country this year. It was estimated that the production loss of paddy due to drought was around 360,000 metric tons which is 23% of the total estimated harvest in a season in this year.

Mr. President

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate Change impacts are expected to be significant in health sector too. Vector borne diseases (essentially mosquito borne) as well as rodent borne diseases and food and water borne diseases are emerging as a serious health problem in Sri Lanka. The prevailing climatic conditions are proving conducive environment for rapid breeding of mosquitoes and the spread of diseases such as dengue fever. It was reported that around 28,000 people suffered from dengue fever in 2011.

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

Mr. President,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Considering the severity of the adverse impacts of climate change Sri Lanka has taken initiatives to build the resilience of the country. Accordingly, Sri Lanka has developed the National Climate Change Policy and prepared the National Climate

Change Adaptation Strategy. At present we are conducting the technology needs assessment project to identify the appropriate technology needs to implement the Climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes in the country. We strongly believe in the transfer of technology to developing 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 Plan in the country. Hence it is imperative that the financing through the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund agreed upon at the international level in order to implement adaptation projects and programs aimed at reducing vulnerability and building resilience within the country is made available without delay.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Even though our per capita emission, which is only 0.6 tons annually and very insignificant in the global sense, we have 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. Among them, I would like to highlight the Island-wide tree planting programme “Deyata Sevana” launched in 2010 by planting 2.1 million trees within a day, and continued in 2011 and 2012 by planting five million trees. This programme has multifaceted objectives such as increasing carbon sequestration and carbon stock as well as ecosystems services. This brilliant programme was further endorsed by His Excellency Mahinda Rajapaksha, the President of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in extending finance for the period of 2013-2016 from the national budget of 2013.

Mr. President,

Developed countries must commit to reduce their emissions in significant proportions to avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change. Hence, we strongly urge to continue the 2nd commitment period of Kyoto Protocol with higher level of aggregate emission reduction. Other developed countries who 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 state at the Rio+20 Conference in June this year 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 for deep cuts in global GHG emissions by the developed countries also considering the historical responsibility and consequently we need to embrace the common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in order to keep the temperature increase below 2⁰C in this century.

Mr. President,

Our belief is that there is an over-riding legal duty of care owed by higher greenhouse gas emitters to the environment and other countries which are struggling to meet the basic needs of their inhabitants. This responsibility has to be acknowledged on an immediate basis as the struggle by such countries to ensure that their emissions do not have a negative impact on other states, faces a long road to achieve its goals.

With this in mind, Mr. President under your esteemed leadership, the Sri Lankan Delegation expects the success of COP18 and CMP8 in Doha to be constituted by the followings:

1. Annex 1 parties to the Kyoto Protocol must commit at Doha at ambitious QELROS to be provisionally applied with effect from 1st January 2013, putting them on a pathway to reducing their emissions to at least 40-50% below the 1990 levels by 2020 while ensuring emission reduction by at least 25-40% by 2017.
2. A long term, scaled up, predictable, new and additional finance for developing countries to build the resilience to climate change impacts and to sustain their socio-economic development.
3. An effective mechanism to build the capacity of vulnerable countries to the adaptive measures to climate change impacts and to meet their sustainable development goals.

4. Effective mechanism that promote access to affordable environmentally sound technologies in order to carry out adaptation and mitigation actions in vulnerable developing countries.
5. It is imperative that the conventions principles of equity and CBDR and respective capabilities are fully and properly reflected in the Ad hoc Working Group of Durban Platform on Enhanced Actions.
6. Establishment of the International Mechanisms for loss and damage in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effect of climate change.

Mr. President,

In conclusion let me say that it is Sri Lanka's fervent hope that for the sake of both present and future generations, this Conference of Parties in Doha, 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 necessary resilience and 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
