

**Statement by Honourable Mr. Hemraj Tater,
Minister for Environment of Nepal at the High-Level Segment of the UN Climate Change
Conference (COP 17 and CMP 7)
7 December 2011, Durban, South Africa**

Madam President,
Honourable Ministers and Heads of Delegation,
Executive Secretary of UNFCCC,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen!

At the outset let me congratulate you, Madam President, on your election to the chair of COP 17 and CMP 7. Allow me also to express our appreciation to the Government and people of South Africa for the warm welcome and hospitality. My delegation pledges our full cooperation to Your Excellency in making the conference a success. We also express our appreciation to the Executive Secretary of UNFCCC and secretariat.

I have the honour to align myself with the statements made by Argentina on behalf of G-77 and China, and by the Gambia on behalf of the LDCs.

Madam President,

We are at a critical juncture here in Durban. Climate change is making lives increasingly unbearable. Principles of equity, justice and solidarity demand that we should be fully responsive to the survival needs and wellbeing of the most vulnerable people. All reports, including the most recent one by the IPCC Chair, have pointed out that the window of opportunity is closing fast and we need to act now and act decisively. That is so true and palpable for the majority of people in Nepal, who have to toil hard in the mountains and on the plains on their fragile lands with increasingly erratic rainfall and extreme weather events. Moreover, there is a real danger of glacial lake outburst floods that can destroy the lives and hard-gained infrastructure. Global retreat of snow will also adversely affect mountain eco-tourism. We have a very low capacity, technology and financial resources to withstand or adapt to them. We contributed least to the climate change, yet we face the greatest of the burden.

Madam President,

A recent study has ranked Nepal as the fourth climate vulnerable country. Over 40 per cent of the total population, about 12 million people, are identified as vulnerable to climate change and are at risk. During the last decade alone, over 7 thousand people died due to climate-induced disasters such as floods and landslides with an estimated loss of US \$ 5.3 billion. The intensity, frequency and scale of impacts are alarming.

Therefore, Durban should be a watershed event by implementing Cancun agreements and Bali Action Plan. Based on common but differentiated responsibilities, we need substantial progress in mitigation, adaptation, finance, transfer of technology and capacity building, because we believe that they are mutually reinforcing. Second commitment of the Kyoto Protocol as well as firm

commitment to overall reduction in emissions below 1.5 degree Celsius is critical. This conference should ensure operationalisation of the Cancun Adaptation Framework, Technology Mechanism, and Green Climate Fund with due priority to LDCs under the authority and guidance of the COP; replenishment of the LDC Fund and other climate change funds; and easy and fast access for NAPA implementation; and support for the preparation and implementation of the NAPs.

Despite our limited national capabilities, we have recognized adaptation as a national 'survival strategy' to protect our people, livelihood and ecosystems.

In early 2011, the Government of Nepal approved a Climate Change Policy. We have begun developing projects to implement most urgent and immediate adaptation actions within NAPA. We have adopted a policy that over 80 percent of the total budget of the climate change programmes will be channelled to the local level with their ownership and leadership, in keeping with the National Framework on Local Adaptation Plan for Action (LAPA). We have continued to promote a clean and renewable energy development path to reduce GHG emissions.

Madam President,

Mountains are a great source of energy and biodiversity, providing water and ecosystem services to the billions of people. Yet, they have been disproportionately affected by climate change. Since COP 15 in Copenhagen, we have started the Mountain Initiative with the hope that impacts of climate change on the mountains are better understood and brought to the mainstream by the global community. They deserve special attention and support in all international processes, to deal with the issues of mountains and the people living there in a holistic manner.

Nepal considers REDD+ and the Clean Development Mechanism as important instruments for sustainable development and poverty reduction. Based on national ownership and leadership, REDD+ will play a vital role in addressing climate change. We require technologies and capacity building support to initiate REDD+ on the ground. We also urge the international community to simplify and make specific rules and procedures on CDM to the LDCs.

Madam President,

While thanking the development partners for their cooperation, we encourage them to provide additional support to uplift the well-being of millions of people in the Nepalese mountains and plains.

In conclusion, there must be a shift from a pledge-based approach to a results-based approach, as scientists are telling us that we may well be on the path to 5 degree Celsius of global warming. There is a need for a stronger political commitment, beyond narrow short-term interests. We should not let our people down. Too much is at stake. We must rise to the occasion and make Durban a success for the sake of the Mother Earth and the people living in the vulnerable countries around the world.

Thank you.