

**Statement of Hon. Anura Priyadarshana Yapa, Minister of Environment, Sri Lanka to 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of Parties to United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change and 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of Parties serving as a Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.  
28<sup>th</sup> Nov - 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 2011 - Durban, South Africa,**

Madam President  
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 my heartfelt greetings and well wishes to the Government of South Africa, and her people for hosting and organizing this important conference in this beautiful city Durban in an excellent manner, and also for their warm hospitality.

Madam President,  
Allow me to congratulate you, on your election as the President of the 17<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of Parties to United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change and 7<sup>th</sup> 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 island nation, Sri Lanka is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts. The highly populated and urbanized coastal zone of the country will be directly impacted on by rising sea levels. Sea level rise will impact upon human habitations, infrastructure in the coastal belt, livelihoods, agriculture through inundation of cultivable lands and increased salinity in the soil and public utilities. Extreme weather events such high intensity rainfall followed by flash floods and landslides, extended dry periods resulting in water scarcity are now becoming common occurrences. Thus, climate change related incidents are making severe impacts on various economic sectors.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Further, in addition to such physical influences, climate change provides direct challenges to health and well-being due to weather pattern changes that have exacerbated both the incubation and transmission of vector borne diseases, landslides and flash floods etc. Therefore, urgent action is needed to enhance the resilience of my country to climate change impacts.

Madam President,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Considering the severity of the impacts of climate change, Sri Lanka has developed the National Climate Change Policy and prepared the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. Accordingly, half a billion of US\$ incremental additional financing, beyond current and ongoing expenditure will be required to implement the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the period of 2011-2016. Hence it is imperative that the financing through the Green Climate 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 of only 0.6 tons annually is very insignificant in the global sense, we have contributed and will contribute to global mitigation efforts. On the domestic front, Madam President, I am glad to declare that Sri Lanka has launched an Island-wide tree planting program “Deyata Sevana” in 2010 by planting 2.1 million trees within a day, which will be continue annually, having multifaceted objectives such as increasing the carbon sequestration and stock as well as ecosystems services. In 2011 also another two million trees were planted in a day.

Madam President,

Despite the commitment made by Annex I parties in the 1<sup>st</sup> commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol to reduce a significant quantum of their GHG emissions, we

regrettably observe that few have honored this commitment. We note that climate change impacts are non-discriminatory, unavoidable and far reaching. We are all affected. Therefore, on an urgent basis, developed countries must commit to reduce their emissions in significant proportion to avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change. It is for this reason, we strongly urge the uninterrupted legally binding 2<sup>nd</sup> commitment period of Kyoto Protocol.

However, Madam President we acknowledge that the process of adaptation and mitigation require a global approach. It is for this reason, we also strongly believe in the transfer of technology to developing countries to ensure that we may meaningfully address the issues of adaptation.

Madam President,

It is becoming increasingly clear that the world cannot achieve sustainable economic growth by following the strategies and methodologies employed by the industrialized countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in order to keep the temperature increase below 2<sup>o</sup>C.

Madam 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, Madam President under your esteemed leadership, the Sri Lankan Delegation expects the success of COP17 in Durban to be constituted by the following:

1. An extended Second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol with deep emission cuts to mitigate the GHG emission to reduce the global warming and unprecedented climate change impacts.
2. The establishment of effective financial mechanisms for developing countries to sustain their socio-economic development and build resilience to climate change impacts
3. The establishment of 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. The development of mechanisms to transfer technology appropriate to national circumstances in order to build the required climate change resilience in respective countries.

Madam 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 Durban, under your able leadership, would be able 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 emissions and assist the vulnerable countries to build 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.

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