

STATEMENT BY

H.E. SAM K. KUTESA

**PRESIDENT OF THE 69TH SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

AT

**The United Nations Framework Convention on
Climate Change Twentieth Session of the
Conference of the Parties (COP 20) and the tenth
session of the Conference of the Parties serving
as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto
Protocol (CMP 10)**

Lima, Peru

9 DECEMBER 2014

[Please check against delivery]

Your Excellency Ollanta Moisés Humala, President of the Republic of Peru,

Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Hon. Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Minister of the Environment and President of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC,

H.E. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Ms. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC,

Distinguished Delegates and participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to join you here today. I thank the Government and people of Peru for their warm hospitality, and extend my appreciation to Ms. Figueres and the staff of the UNFCCC for their dedication and hard work.

Excellencies,

This conference is indeed timely. The expectations are high, and rightly so. Climate change is one of the biggest global challenges of our generation, which should be addressed with a sense of urgency and unity. We do not have the luxury of time, and business as usual is not an option.

Our planet is moving towards the tipping point, with climate change threatening the existence of humankind. Without immediate and concerted efforts, it will be impossible for the present and succeeding generations to achieve sustainable development.

The recent Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) confirms that the world's climate is unequivocally warming and that human activity is primarily responsible. The evidence is clear and incontrovertible.

Many of the observed changes are unprecedented, ranging from increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases, warming of the atmosphere and oceans, diminishing snow and ice, and rising sea-levels, to mention a few.

The adverse impacts of climate change affect every country around the world; threatening food security and undermining efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. Any delay in combating climate change will come at a great cost to us all.

In Uganda, my country, the snow-capped glaciers on Mountain Ruwenzori's highest peaks at almost 17,000 feet, had a combined area of around 2.7 square miles at the start of last century. It now occupies less than 0.4 square miles. It is estimated that if the current trend caused by warming of the atmosphere continues, there may be no snow glaciers on the mountain in the next two decades.

We also know that some small island States such as Kiribati face an existential threat due to rising sea-levels. If the current situation persists, greenhouse gas emissions will cause further climate warming, increasing the likelihood of severe and irreversible impacts on people and ecosystems around the world.

Excellencies,

The good news or glimmer of hope, depending on how optimistic one would like to be, is that we can take measures to step back from the precipice of catastrophic climate change consequences. If we do more mitigation today, we can reduce the cost of adaptation tomorrow.

There are a number of strategies we can pursue now to lead to climate-resilient pathways while improving livelihoods, sustaining economic growth and environmental integrity.

To do so, we will need the collective political will of the international community to transform the current economic and social models into low carbon and ultimately climate neutral economies. This should be done on the basis of

equity and in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

As President of the General Assembly, I selected climate change as one of the key priorities for the 69th Session. It is essential to ensure that negotiations on the post-development agenda, the third Conference on Financing for Development and on a global climate change agreement are mutually reinforcing.

So, what are the key messages for all of us at this Conference of the Parties? First, we have a critical year ahead for the negotiation process taking place under the auspices of the UNFCCC. Our discussions here in Lima will be instrumental in helping to deliver a draft agreement that can be finalized in Paris in December 2015. In this context, this conference is a decisive step forward in the journey towards achieving a universal, binding agreement in Paris.

Secondly, we expect an ambitious outcome and similarly, should be ambitious in the commitments we make. The draft agreement should address all issues in a comprehensive and balanced way, including mitigation and adaptation actions, as well as the provision of appropriate means of implementation and a framework for monitoring and transparency.

This conference should also address the definition of the elements to be included in the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), as well as the timeframe for the evaluation process.

Third, the current greenhouse gas emission reduction trends will not be sufficient to limit the global temperature increase to below 2 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels. If we want to achieve our post-2020 ambitions, we need to make bold commitments, take immediate action and continue to shift our consumption and production patterns towards low-carbon models.

Fourth, it is crucial for those countries that have not yet done so, to speed up the ratification process of the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. We must not

overlook the fact that the Kyoto Protocol remains an important piece of the big picture.

Fifth, there is need for scaling-up climate financing, innovation and investment in environmentally sound technologies and infrastructure, as well as capacity building. In this regard, the initial capitalization of the Green Climate Fund to the tune of about US \$ 10 billion so far is a welcome development.

Going forward, honouring previous commitments, including mobilizing of US\$ 100 billion annually from 2020, and raising additional resources will be critical for implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you may know, I will convene a High Level Event on Climate Change on June 29, 2015 in New York. This event, which will take place at a mid-point between COP 20 in Lima and COP 21 in Paris, is meant to keep the momentum and compliment the ongoing UNFCCC negotiation process.

It will provide member States with a platform to exchange views, share experiences and take stock of the progress made ahead of the Paris meeting.

Today, I invite all member States at the highest level, along with members of civil society, the private sector as well as other relevant stakeholders to attend and actively participate in the events scheduled for June next year.

Finally, the current generation of political leaders have a historic responsibility to take bold measures to curb the effects of climate change.

The world is watching with anticipation and justified anxiety. We need to do whatever it takes to reach a binding and ambitious climate change agreement in December next year.

I thank you for your kind attention.