

Statement by Her Excellency Dr. Aja Isatou Njie, Vice and Minister for Women's Affairs on the occasion of the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries on the Climate Change in relation to LDCS.

Mr. Chairman

**Mr. Richard Kinley, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNFCCC
Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am honoured and privileged to be invited to make a statement on the climate change vulnerability segment of the fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. The issue of climate change is a serious global development challenge that continues to dampen our development gains particularly in LDCs. The issue of addressing climate change vulnerability remains an important development challenge that must be addressed if we are to address food insecurity, income poverty and prevent natural disasters such as floods.

Mr. Chairman

A few months ago, we were in a Climate Change Conference in Mexico to continue deliberations on the future climate change regime. As least developed countries, our anticipation was, and still is, achieving enhanced international cooperation to support the LDCs to address the challenges of climate change in relation to social and economic development. The Conference reviewed the implementation of the special package of support under the UNFCCC to assist LDCs to address urgent and immediate needs to adapt to climate change since its inception 10 years ago.

Mr. Chairman

We took advantage of the special package of support and prepared national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs). These programmes are a result of rigorous stakeholder consultations aimed at sensitising our populations on the impacts of climate change to enable them identify and implement priority interventions that would minimize such impacts.

Consistent with other findings such as that of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), our NAPAs have revealed that *agriculture and food security, water, and coastal livelihoods* are the top most areas

where impacts are felt the most. These areas are main providers for human, social and economic life in the LDCs.

Our communities, through the NAPAs, are looking forward to climate change adaptation solutions that would achieve and safeguard food security; water security and sanitation; protect life and property on low lying and coastal areas; and protect and enhance ecosystems for sustainable provision of ecosystem goods and services.

Currently, we are anxious to implement the projects identified by our communities in the NAPAs, and pave the way for medium- and longer-term adaptation planning.

Mr. Chairman

In our attempt to addressing the challenges of climate change, mechanisms established to support the LDCs have proven to be slow and quit often too demanding for LDCs to make progress at the pace that would adequately response to climate change problems. We started completing our NAPAs as early as 2005, and by the end of 2008 forty out of forty-eight NAPAs had been completed. Already, it was evident that NAPAs would require no less than USD 2 billion for their implementation. We now are informed that of the USD 320 million that has been provide under the LDC Fund, only half of this amount has been allocated for actual projects. Certainly, a lot needs to be done to ensure that the implementations of adaptation processes in LDCs are expedited. We need to act now with utmost urgency against scourges on our communities and their livelihoods before it is too late.

Mr. Chairman

As we look into the future on climate change adaptation, we want to enhance our efforts on integrating gender considerations as women remain the most vulnerable section of the society in terms of the impact of climate change. We would like to move forward to the implementation of medium- and long-term adaptation needs, and the integration of the adaptation needs and activities into our development planning processes. We also recognize that, given adequate support, as LDCs we can also contribute in minimizing the growth of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere by devising and implementing low carbon development strategies. To achieve all these, we certainly need a transformational change in the way LDCs are currently being supported to implement NAPAs.

Mr. Chairman

In order to complete the implementation of our NAPAs, and to embark on longer term adaptation, we need adequate, timely, and easy access funds for implementation of adaptation programmes. We need human and institutional capacity building support to undertake research, planning and implementation of adaptation measures and low carbon development strategies. Efforts to strength technological capacities of LDCs in order to adapt to climate change and to devise and implement low-carbon development strategies are critical.

Mr. Chairman

Istanbul Programme of Action should therefore produce a renewed partnership that is ambitious, comprehensive, forward-looking and result-oriented so that desired socio-economic transformation is achieved in LDCs in the next decade. The progress that LDCs will make has to be sustainable and comprehensive to have the desired impact on reducing poverty and accelerating economic growth.

Mr. Chairman

In conclusion, we must acknowledge that the problem of climate change required global approach and concerted effort of all stakeholders. Istanbul Programme of Action should therefore drive us towards global and national actions to address the full scope of vulnerability in LDCS. It must strive to establish a unified intergovernmental technical support mechanism cutting across all sectors such as agriculture, water, health, climate change and energy among others.

Thank you.