



STATEMENT BY
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United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24)
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Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset I would like to thank the Government of Poland and the people of Katowice for hosting this important conference and for the warm hospitality extended to us. Using this opportunity, I would like to also thank UNFCCC Secretariat for its excellent arrangement and documentation of COP 24.

South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) is an Intergovernmental organization established in 1982 by the governments of South Asia namely: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

SACEP being an Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) is mandated to coordinate and support its member countries at policy, planning, capacity development, coordination and awareness raising about environment and climate change issues in South Asia and offers an ideal platform for bringing together all the eight South Asian member states at one place.

Mr. Mresident!

In recent decades, changes in climate have caused severe impacts on natural and human systems on all continents and across the oceans. This leaves South Asia with no exception and the impacts of climate change are already being felt with challenges to growth and development.

About 70% of South Asians live in rural areas and the economies of the countries rely mainly on agriculture, natural resources, forestry and fisheries. The Agriculture sector is highly exposed and vulnerable to extreme climate events and the impacts of climate change and its production is constrained by frequent natural disasters such as floods, droughts, landslides, intense rain, hailstorms and cold and heat waves.

Over the last decade around 481 disaster events were reported in South Asia claiming around 135,000 lives, causing heavy economic losses to the countries. In 2015 itself South Asia accounted for 64% of total global fatalities that included 52 disasters and the loss of 14,647 lives.

Mr. President!

With the successful adoption of the Paris Agreement, all the countries in South Asia are now beginning to plan for implementation of the NDCs that they have submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat.

Based on its experience of more than three decades, SACEP has learned that cooperation and partnership at regional level can catalyze solutions in response to climate change and is actively engaged in this area of work on a number of fronts such as:

- Strengthening their “climate” governance to ensure that the member states effectively implement their NDCs, by conducting capacity-building activities for all actors and in all territories;
- Supporting member countries in formulating policies, strategies, programmes and projects to implement activities that advance priorities identified in their respective intended nationally determined contributions in a manner consistent with the goals identified by Paris Agreement;
- Supporting member states efforts to build resilience and adaptive capacity.
- Designing transformational “climate programmes and projects in the region with a priority focus on adaptation.

SACEP is hopeful that UNFCCC COP 24 adopts decisions ensuring full implementation of the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement establishes an enduring framework for climate action. It creates the mechanism, the architecture, for us to continually tackle this problem in an effective way. We need to adopt its implementation work program, right here, right now, as the science is day by day alarming. As an intergovernmental organization, we embrace the Paris Agreement goals and ready to work with the UNFCCC Secretariat to facilitate its implementation in the South Asia Region.

Thank you