

Statement by H.E. Malik Amin Aslam  
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High Level Segment of COP 24

Your Excellency, Mr. Michał Kurtyka, President of COP 24  
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,  
Madam Executive Secretary,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to first of all congratulate the Government and people of Poland for assuming the presidency and hosting this COP-24 in the beautiful city of Katowice. This is now the third COP hosted in Poland – which in itself is a testament to the commitment that Poland has to the success of the climate negotiations process. In this regard, I want to assure you of Pakistan's fullest support in carrying forward the climate agenda.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work put in by the government of Fiji as Presidency of COP 23 in forging and bringing us to the Katowice negotiations table.

Mr. President,

Every year, we all gather to correct a political landscape which seems to have clearly lost sync with science as well as reality. The science of climate change is crying out “loud and clear” with the latest IPCC report warning of a suppressed timeframe for meaningful action and a critical need for mobilizing corresponding international climate finance.

Mr. President,

12 years is what we now have before the inevitable irreversibility of climate change kicks in and 12 years is what we have before we collectively push our planet over a threshold of chaotic uncertainty. This clarion call is equally matched with the reality of climate change which has been ferociously manifesting itself across the world - and especially in Pakistan.

Pakistan is ranked 135<sup>th</sup> in terms of its contribution to global emissions but has been in the top ten vulnerable countries consistently over the past two decades.

For Pakistan, climate change is neither “fake” news nor a convoluted conspiracy – Mr. President, it is a stark reality. It stares us in the face every day as we are forced to cope with recurring super floods, unpredicted

droughts, chaotic heat waves, melting glaciers, threatening GLOFs as well as rapidly shifting weather patterns.

Over the past four decades, 90% of the natural disasters in Pakistan have been triggered by climate change and this places us unenviably at 8<sup>th</sup> position in the current German Watch vulnerability rankings. Climate change is, today, affecting our daily lives, disrupting our economic progress, loading almost 8% of our GDP with forced climate costs, posing grave security and social risks and creating millions of climate migrants, all “unjustly” bearing the burden of the global climate crisis.

Mr. President,

Pakistan is a country without a choice on climate adaptation as it is facing up to the impacts at ground “zero”. Our climate adaptation needs are between \$7 to \$14 billion per annum and this is all forced adaptation. This, subsequently, makes climate compatible development an inevitable direction to take and building resilience of our vulnerable communities as well as our infrastructure, an undeniable option. We are committed to doing both as we live through the age of this forced adaptation. Subsequently, we are working on shifting towards climate resilient agriculture as well as an initiative to utilize our flood waters for ecosystem restoration and ground water recharge – a nature based solution to “Recharge Pakistan”

While on climate adaptation Pakistan does not have a choice, On climate mitigation we have ourselves chosen to responsibly partner in the global efforts – not because the burden of historical climate baggage is forcing us to but because Pakistan is willing to think differently about the future, develop along a different pathway and become an “enabler” of the new transition economy that our scientists tell us, is possible if and only if we have the political will to make that choice. This low carbon economy is the only solution we have to climate change and in Pakistan we are responsibly steering the country towards this green growth.

Mr. President,

Starting from the small province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, we embarked on a journey to plant a billion trees and 4 years down the line, the “Billion Tree Tsunami” became the first entity under the global “Bonn Challenge” to not only meet its pledge of restoring 3.48 million ha of forest but has today significantly enhanced it by restoring over 6 million ha of forest. This project created half a million green jobs, revived the forest biodiversity, engaged the indigenous communities and energized our youth to become custodians of a green future. This has now laid the foundations for the “10 Billion Tree Tsunami” which our Prime Minister recently launched across the country and all of this has been fully financed by the Government.

We have so far, spent more than US \$ 120 million on the initiative, and plan to spend another estimated US \$ 1 billion through domestic resources.

This green political will is also manifesting itself in the renewable energy sector with the Government fully committed to capitalize the large indigenous potential in wind, solar and hydro as well as utilizing nuclear energy. More than 365 small run-of-the- river hydro projects have been set up in the north providing access to off-grid and affordable “zero carbon” electricity. In the transport sector, with catalytic GCF financing, Pakistan has finalized a multi-million dollar “zero emission” bus metro system for the city of Karachi operating on cattle waste generated biogas.

All the above are indicators Mr. President, of a shifting landscape in Pakistan under the new government towards a cleaner, greener and sustainable future aiming for lowering the emissions and ensuring climate resilient growth. I must emphasize that these actions and initiatives go much beyond our NDC and are happening in spite of the expected external financial flows not materializing. Within the global context, however, this needs to be the exception rather than the rule.

I also take this opportunity at this COP to express our intention to nationally review our NDC before the Paris Agreement takes effect in 2020. It will account for the programmes and actions that our present government has

initiated all of which will have a significant positive impact on Pakistan's demonstrable contribution towards global mitigation.

Mr. President

Our yearly sojourns to exotic climate COP destinations will remain an exercise in futility unless we are willing to politically galvanize the enhanced support needed for enhanced action. To date, the \$100 billion of climate finance remains a "pipe dream", with very limited amount actually delivered on ground. Even this paltry amount has been trickling through an extremely complex financial infrastructure with very difficult and restrictive access and driven sometimes by priorities of contributing countries rather than the needs of developing countries.

A lot will need to change for this climate of poor political delivery to change.

The Paris rule book needs to be finalized and operationalized with equity and transparency and be fully consistent with the principle of "Common But Differentiated Responsibility", which is at the heart of Paris Agreement. The Warsaw mechanism for Loss and Damage needs to be brought back from the cold storage. The GCF needs to be replenished with new and additional financing and its operational efficiency to be further enhanced to deliver faster and easier climate finance to developing countries. Climate Adaptation needs to regain center stage along with Mitigation and clear "adaptation targets"

need to be agreed. Finally, the progression in ambitions, through the Talanoa dialogue, needs to reflect not just mitigation but also provision and delivery of climate finance.

Mr. President,

We do also appreciate the launching of the first replenishment process of the GCF. However, it must take into account the current and future needs of the developing countries. Just to highlight the scale, Pakistan alone requires US \$ 40 billion to meet its NDC mitigation target by 2030.

Let me conclude by saying that climate politics risks falling off the chart as far as climate change is concerned. Katowice is providing us an opportunity to bring it back on track and we have no option but to seize it.

Pakistan remains committed and ready to play its part but we all have to forge a coordinated effort – “Change Together” to make sure we do not become the architects of our own extinction.

I thank you.