Statement by Hon'ble Mr. Thakur Prasad Sharma, Minister for Environment of Nepal at the High-Level Segment of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 16 and CMP 6)

07-10 December 2009, Cancun, Mexico

Madam President
Honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegation
Executive Secretary of UNFCCC
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset let me congratulate you, Madam President on your election for COP16 to UNFCCC and CMP6 to Kyoto Protocol. Allow me to express our appreciation to the Government and people of Mexico for the warm hospitality and welcome, in this beautiful city of Cancun, and for the excellent arrangement for this conference. We are confident that under your able and dynamic leadership, this climate regime will accomplish the unmet needs and challenges. My delegation pledges our fullest cooperation to Your Excellency in making the conference a success for us all.

I have the honor to associate with the statements made by Yemen on behalf of G-77 and China, and by Lesotho on behalf of Least Developed Countries.

Madam President,
During the last two decades, international community has been engaged in climate change matter. We consider UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol as foundational instruments to deal effectively with the impacts of climate change. It has received high level of political momentum in the recent years as climate change has become a real threat and linked to the very 'survival' of people and countries having low level of capacity, technology and resources to cope with its adverse impacts . I It is our responsibility to translate our commitments into actions right at this conference.

In our journey from Berlin to Cancun during the last 16 years, we have made little progress for the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol. We think, it

is high time to evaluate ourselves on what progress we made on common agenda of adaptation, mitigation, financial flow, technology transfer and capacity building to address the challenges that we have faced and we are facing. Little progress does not provide us opportunity to protect our climate vulnerable communities. How we act now will determine the future of our people daily affected by climate change impacts.

Snows and glaciers are retreating, sea levels are rising, human lives and civilizations are at great threat. Privileged of the privilege people, like us, may be more responsible than the people suffering from man-made catastrophe. Madam President, we don't have the privilege to be unnecessarily bogged down on phrases and words to be inserted or deleted in the negotiated text. We must act with utmost urgency and due diligence to save lives of millions and their precious civilizations. Indeed, addressing the challenges of climate change is a moral obligation and existential imperative. That is why, Madam President, we must succeed in Cancun and that is why Madam President we whole heartedly appreciate the Mexican efforts to make the negotiations transparent and produce balanced texts for us all to agree on

We call upon the developed countries to abide by their existing commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as already agreed within the framework of the Kyoto Protocol. We urge all Annex I countries to set ambitious global goals and targets to further reduce greenhouse gas emission at source. We urge the developed countries to provide scaled up financial resources for NAPA implementation through existing Convention mechanisms. We also urge them to support for fragile mountain ecosystems on a priority basis.

Madam President,
Nepal desperately aspires for Cancun outcome, being one of the most vulnerable mountain countries, to determine our future by seeking to minimize impacts of climate change, and benefitting from climate change regime. The Cancun outcome should focus on compliance of the Convention and Protocol provisions; and sustainable development and poverty reduction as foremost priority. LDCs must be at the uppermost in our mind, as they are the least contributors in GHG emissions but are the most sufferers and least able to withstand the adverse impacts of climate change. We need predictable, substantial and long-term finance with direct and easy access to resources and technology with an

institutional framework and governance that caters to the interests and concerns of LDCs, including countries with fragile mountain ecosystems. We see Clean Development Mechanism and REDD+ are important instruments for sustainable development and poverty reduction and we urge to make CDM rules and procedures simple and unambiguous and simple REDD+ procedures to benefit the LDCs.

Madam President,
Nepal, a landlocked and mountainous country with highest peak of the world, is greatly affected by the adverse impacts of climate change. These Impacts are clearly visible on water in the region and its ecosystem. Himalayas are the water tower. Snows and glaciers are melting very fast. Just to cite an example, the Main Rongbuk Glacier in the Mount Everest area has experienced an average vertical loss of 330 feet glacier during the last eight and half decades and this loss is close to 4 feet a year. The rate of glaciers retreat is as high as 20 meters a year thereby posing serious threats of Glacier Lakes Outbursts Foods (GLOF) posing serious and direct threats to the lives and property of hundreds of thousands people, bio-diversity and ecosystem of high Himalayas. Studies have shown that river water in Nepal will increase by about 5% till 2030, and will decrease by 28% by the end of this century which will have extremely negative impacts on drinking water and other water resources projects. This might increase the number of 'climate refugees'. Over 40 percent of the total population, about 12 million people, in Nepal are vulnerable to climate change and are at risks. Within the last decade, over 7 thousand people died due to climate-induced disasters such as floods and landslides with an estimated loss of US $ 5.3 billion. Similar impacts are becoming prominent on forests, agriculture and food security, health, livelihoods, water resources and infrastructures. It should be noted that the temperature in Nepal is increasing at a rate much higher than the global average which would ultimately have adverse impacts on the hydrological system of the entire region. These clearly indicate that Nepal is greatly affected by climate-induced disasters.

In the recent years, Nepal has initiated number of activities. We have started Mountain Alliance Initiatives with the hope that impacts of climate change in the mountains are better understood and addressed by the global community, and countries lacking adaptive capacity are supported timely in accordance with the Convention's provisions. Nepal has recently launched NAPA and we are in the process of its implementation and also by preparing Local Adaptation Plan of

Action (LAPA). Necessary coordination mechanisms are in place. Climate adaptation is a priority in our national development agenda as we consider adaptation as a survival strategy. We are in the process of developing Second National Communication and Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience. We have integrated climate resilience into our national development process, and adopted clean energy development path.

Madam Chair, let me take this opportunity to thank our development partners for their understanding and support concerning climate change, sustainable development and poverty reduction in Nepal. We encourage them to do more, including for urgent and enhanced level of cooperation with predictable funding.

In conclusion, Madam President, the delegation of Nepal urges the Conference to continue on with the two track processes and agree on:

1. Second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol to the earliest possible in accordance with its Article 3.9;
2. Deep cut of greenhouse gas emissions below 1.5 degree Celsius;
3. Legally binding agreement on elements of the Bali Action Plan;
4. Establish a new, easily accessible and predicable fund with direct access provision; and
5. Provide adequate financial and technological support to the climate vulnerable countries with fragile mountain ecosystems and LDCs.

Thank you all
8 December 2010
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