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The Repblic of Uganda

NATIONAL STATEMENT
BY
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AT THE 16TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC AND 6TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES, SERVING AS A MEETING OF PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL, 29TH NOVEMBER TO 10TH DECEMBER 2010; MOON PALACE-CANCUN, MEXICO.

Madam President,

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government
Honourable Ministers
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Madam President,
My Delegation wishes to join other delegations in congratulating you upon your unanimous election to the office of the President of the 16th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 6th Conference of Parties serving as a meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. Uganda is confident of your leadership to guide this Conference to a successful outcome.

Allow me to take this opportunity to express the deep gratitude of my Delegation to the Government and people of the United Mexican States for the warm hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in this wonderful city of Cancun.
The choice of this serene green venue, is a testimony of your Government's unwavering commitment to the survival of our mother planet earth.

Madam President,

Having agreed to a global action on climate change in 1992, Parties to the Convention have been annually gathering in different cities since COP1 in 1995, to take stock of progress made and agree on a way forward towards achieving the objectives of this very carefully crafted Convention. We are now about 16 years down the process, but unfortunately we are still very far from realizing our set objectives, that is, addressing climate change and its adverse effects.

Madam President,

The scientific reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have made it clear to all of us that climate change can seriously harm the future development of our economies, societies and ecosystems if not addressed in a safe timeframe.

For Uganda, the vulnerability of our population and the socio–economic development of the country to the negative impacts of climate change, are an increasing concern to Government. The increasing extreme climate change-related events such as high temperatures, droughts, heavy rainfall, hailstones, floods, landslides and associated health, water and infrastructure problems have continued to threaten and undermine Government efforts to realize its objective of attaining sustainable socio-economic development, including achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and have left behind a trail of physical damage and emotional stresses.

Consecutive years of frequent and severe droughts and floods since 2001, in the eastern part of the country, have resulted into crop failure, low livestock productivity, infrastructure destruction and an estimated 50,000 households displaced by floods in 2007.

On 1st March 2010, Uganda experienced a devastating landslide that swept through several villages on the Mt Elgon slopes in Eastern Uganda, leaving 400 people dead, of which 100 were school children. Livestock, crop fields, settlements and infrastructure, particularly roads were also destroyed.

The effect of a warming climate in Uganda is well evidenced by the loss of glacial cover of the Rwenzori Mountains. It has been estimated that the mountain icecaps have receded by 40% as compared to 1955 cover and continue to retreat by tens of metres each year due to increased air temperatures. The retreat of glaciers is already having negative impact on the water resources, tourism industry and the lives of local indigenous people. It may also lead to the release of carbon locked up in these glaciers thus contributing further to global warming. It is estimated that if the current rate of melting is maintained, the Rwenzori ice caps will unfortunately be no more by 2023.

Madam President,

The Convention is clear on commitments, obligations and the roles of all Parties. It also provides for Guiding Principles in Article 3. Cognizant of the inadequacies in all efforts under the process and the increasing climate change related impacts, the Bali Action Plan (BAP) identified areas that should be addressed to ensure a quick solution to the problem.

We have principally agreed on the need for enhanced mitigation, adaptation, technology development and transfer, financing and capacity building. However, there are still divergent views on the best approaches to adopt. Iam, therefore, hopeful that we can resolve the bulk of the outstanding issues here in Cancun and agree on a way forward to finalize them by the next session in Durban, South Africa.

Madam President,

The issue of the definition of vulnerability should not be a point to delay action on adaptation. What is important is to appreciate that developing countries and more so the LDCs, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Africa are the most vulnerable yet with a low adaptive capacity. There is urgency to finalize the institutional framework and governance issues under the COP to advance adaptation implementation. For Uganda, like other LDCs; accessible, adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for adaptation is a matter of high priority. Delayed support for adaptation is therefore tantamount to a demise of the most vulnerable.

We note that water has not been given due attention in our discussions despite it being a key component in all biological and physical systems. It is therefore imperative that means and ways are devised on how this resource can sustain both the biological and physical systems with the climatic trends. There is need to address the issue of water in the appropriate subsidiary bodies of the Convention and the climate change process as a whole.

Article 4.9 of the Convention also takes cognizance of the special circumstances and needs of the Least Developed Countries and rightly urges developed countries to support these countries for technology and the finances that are so badly needed for both adaptation and mitigation.

Uganda, therefore, calls for expedited advancement on the issue of technology development and transfer and the improvement of the financing especially for adaptation, technology and capacity building. The progress so far made in this area is acknowledged but it is not adequate. We all know that we are at different levels of development and with unique circumstances, which would call for categorization of technology. We therefore need to be more realistic and focus on technology for all and then sectoral technologies.

Regarding capacity building, Uganda believes that though cross-cutting, it should be accorded high priority. We support the proposal to establish the capacity building panel that will oversee the implementation of the decisions reached on this subject.

Madam President,

Uganda would like to associate itself with the urgent need to address mitigation issues as this would lead to saving our mother earth and reducing the future costs of adaptation. Among the developing country parties, there is a high level of willingness to voluntarily undertake appropriate supported mitigation actions.

I wish to inform the conference that there are already on-going mitigation efforts in my country. We therefore acknowledge the importance and urgency for deeper cuts by the developed country Parties and, therefore, a need to resolve the issue of 'numbers'. There is need for a clear indication of the continuation of the Kyoto Protocol and thus amendment of Annex B as provided for in Article 3.9. We must also agree to an acceptable level of comparability of the commitments by the non-Kyoto Parties with those defined under Kyoto Protocol commitments. The level of the commitments and targets consistent with the science is a critical issue and must be part of the desired outcome.

Madam President,

Regarding REDD, Uganda will build on the momentum started in Bali and captured both in the UNFCCC process as well as in the supportive processes such as the "REDD-plus Partnership". In Copenhagen, countries agreed to recognize the crucial role of REDD-plus and the need to provide positive incentives to such actions through the immediate establishment of a mechanism including REDD-plus, to enable the mobilization of financial resources from developed countries. We therefore think that Cancun is an opportune time to establish this mechanism"

Madam President,

On the issue of shared vision, we recall that during the UN Secretary-General's Climate Change Summit in New York in September 2009, over 100 world leaders called for a comprehensive, ambitious and fair international climate change deal to have been agreed in Copenhagen. Uganda therefore supports a fair international climate change regime, with clear long-term global goals based on science, a special focus on vulnerabilities of especially the most vulnerable with low adaptive capacities and fair global trading system, which supports sustainable production and development efforts of the developing countries.

Madam President,

We recognize the ever increasing demands for national socio-economic growth and development, but also we must recognize our international obligations to save our mother planet earth. Therefore, there is urgency for balancing the two, through increased commitment to the climate change process, and ultimately come up with a legally binding outcome as the best option.

Madam President,

Let me conclude by requesting the distinguished delegates to reflect on the voices in the documentary film at the opening of the session, which cried out to all of us in positions of responsibility to **"open their eyes, instead of closing them"**. Climate change and its increasing complexity of adverse impacts is driving the world to another dimension of disasters, which might be more challenging, costly and with less hopes for humane solutions. The time to act is yesterday and therefore let us walk the talk.

I thank you

For God and My Country.