



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Statement
of**

**H.E. Dr. Mok Mareth
Senior Minister, Minister of Environment
of the Kingdom of Cambodia**

High-level Event on Climate Change

**Thematic plenary I - Adaptation:
“The challenge of adaptation - from vulnerability to resilience”**

**United Nations, New York
Monday, 24 September 2007**

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored and pleased to represent the Kingdom of Cambodia at this meeting. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon for inviting us to attend this important meeting. We note with great interest the initiatives taken by the Secretary-General and his determination to forge-ahead to meet this global challenge.

We associate ourselves with the Statement made by Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr President,

Climate change is widely considered to be one of the gravest threats to the sustainability of the planet's environment, the well-being of its people and the strength of its economies.

Political stability and peace is a fundamental prerequisite for a country's advancement towards democracy, poverty alleviation and sustainable development, as well as for its meaningful participation in various environmental treaties, including in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Cambodia is a least developed country and is therefore vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, in particular, floods and droughts, which have caused serious impacts on the economy, the environment and people's livelihoods.

As Party to the UNFCC and its Kyoto Protocol, Cambodia has made its utmost efforts to implement the Convention and the Protocol: in such matters as promotion of CDM projects, preparation of National Communications to the UNFCCC, and preparation of a National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change (NAPA). The last one, as we hope, will help the country address the urgent needs to adapt to the impacts of climate change as well as to achieve Cambodia's MDGs and other development objectives under climate change conditions. We believe, that priority adaptation measures should primarily focus on the improvement and development of adaptation infrastructures using project-based capacity building approach for stakeholders as opposed to purely general capacity building. Programmes to support and enhance community-based initiatives to address climate change should be also of high priority. In addition, we feel that LDCs need to develop and implement programmes for climate forecast and dissemination systems. And lastly, there is a need for comprehensive adaptation studies and for long-term programmes on research and education for addressing climate change.

So, our next challenge is to mobilise resources for the implementation of this NAPA. Because of the limited financial and technical capacities of most LDCs, we would like to ask all Parties to urgently provide funding support under simplified procedures to implement adaptation measures in the LDCs, in particular, those with immediate and direct impacts on the livelihoods of vulnerable communities.

Mr President,

There is a need for international consensus on the scope of adaptation and means to enhance the availability of, and access to adaptation funds. Existing funds theoretically available for LDCs, such as the LDC Fund, the Special Climate Change, and the Adaptation Fund, are very small comparing to the required costs of adaptation for developing countries. Furthermore, there are no clear guidelines and difficulties in accessing these many, but poorly coordinated and fragmented funding mechanisms. As for the yet to-be-operational Adaptation Fund, we believe that CDM projects should not have to be burdened by mandatory proceeds to this Fund as they already contribute to sustainable development.

Regarding the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund, complex rules and requirements, such as “incremental cost”, limit access of LDCs to it, for adaptation projects. It is our understanding that currently funds from GEF Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) cannot be used for adaptation activities as they “do not directly benefit the global environment”. From the ethical point of view, countries should not be held responsible for problems they have not caused but instead be funded on an unconditional, full-cost basis to adapt to climate change. Therefore, the relevance of the GEF principle of “incremental cost” should be reexamined, in particular, for adaptation projects. There is also a need to improve cooperation and coordination among GEF Agencies and to harmonise their rules and procedures over GEF funded projects to allow genuine country drivenness, ownership, accountability and sustainability.

Mr. President,

Compared with mitigation, adaptation has traditionally received less attention. As a result, current climate agreements provide neither binding commitments for adaptation funding, nor mechanism for private sector involvement. Hence, a legally binding instrument such as, a new protocol under the UNFCCC should be explored to commit meaningful funding to adaptation based on some key concepts such as, vulnerability, equity, sustainability, and polluter-must-pay, etc. On the other hand, private sector involvement in implementing adaptation activities needs to be encouraged through various economic incentives.

Thank you.