



STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, ON
'ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE: THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE WORLD AT
WORK' DURING THE THEMATIC DEBATE CONVENED BY THE PRESIDENT OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT THE 62ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON FEBRUARY 13, 2008

Mr. President,

At the outset, permit me to express our appreciation of your initiative and leadership on this important issue. We associate ourselves with the statement made yesterday by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) remains the only comprehensive framework to deal with climate change issues, a fact reaffirmed during the recent Bali meeting. Efforts to address climate change, including this thematic debate, must support and feed into the ongoing processes under the UNFCCC rather than create parallel processes. Such efforts should also be based on the provisions and principles of UNFCCC, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

Other UN system entities can assist, as per their mandates, in the effective implementation of the provisions, commitments and action plans of the UNFCCC. Bertolt Brecht once said that it is sometimes "a crime to talk about a tree because it implies a silence about injustice". For developing countries, the imperative therefore is poverty eradication and development. The UN is best placed to ensure that addressing climate change does not impede this objective.

I may also add that despite the comprehensive nature of the UNFCCC, background documents for this thematic debate have erroneously referred to 'framework' / 'comprehensive global agreement' while referring to the agreed outcome of the Bali Action Plan. Other mechanisms of the UNFCCC, like the negotiations under the Kyoto Protocol for GHG reduction commitments for Annex I Parties post-2012 have also been ignored.

Mr. President,

For developing countries, the issue of adaptation is of crucial importance. They have not contributed to causing climate change, yet will be most adversely affected by it. Further, they also lack adequate means and sufficient capacities for effective adaptation actions. The UN can play a role in this area by assisting national adaptation strategies through the UN's operational activities, particularly in capacity building, financial and technical support, as well as knowledge sharing. Ultimately, the UN's most effective role in adaptation is to accelerate development, which is the best form of adaptation.

The issues of technology and financing are vital for effectively addressing climate change. We would have liked to see a detailed coverage of these issues in the background documents provided for this debate. Current mechanisms to promote cost-effective and affordable access to advanced clean technologies for developing countries have not been very successful. The UN must play a leading role in this area by promoting joint research; country-driven approaches incorporating existing capacities; adoption and diffusion of technology; greater focus on adaptation technologies; and most important of all, a facilitative IPR regime that balances rewards for innovators with the common good of humankind. The issue may be difficult: the UN must grasp the nettle and not bypass it in background documents.

Similarly, there is an urgent need to provide new and additional financial resources to developing countries for addressing climate change, without diverting resources meant for development. The role of the UN cannot merely be limited to assisting developing countries in formulating policies to enhance climate change related investment flows. It would be myopic to believe that such national efforts would be sufficient to raise the large resource flows required. Instead, the UN must assist in the development of financial mechanisms and funds for effective resource flows into developing countries.

On mitigation, rather than identifying mitigation strategies by developing countries, the UN should focus on how developed countries can sharply reduce their GHG emissions. In this regard, the UN should play an active role in advocacy by urging developed countries to meet their commitments, and to take further ambitious GHG reduction commitments. The UN should also identify various ways and means by which developed countries can take action in mitigation. The developed countries must reduce their emissions so that the developing countries can breathe and grow. In the gospel of Saint Thomas, discovered and authenticated not so long ago, it is stated that blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. In terms of climate change, one can add that blessed are the poor for they have saved the earth. Perhaps it would now be time for the rich to do something in the same direction.

Mr. President,

Climate Change must be addressed in the context of sustainable development, rather than attempting to integrate it with trade, social, economic, security, migration or humanitarian issues. We would also caution against using discussions on climate change to influence other ongoing UN processes like the System-wide coherence or the International Environment Governance. While the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination can play a role in coordinating UN system efforts, we would like to see much greater member state oversight.

Mr. President,

Partnerships will play an important role in efforts to address climate change through adaptation, mitigation, financing, technology transfer and sustainable forest management and conservation. The UN should foster and promote creative models of partnership, which can assist national efforts. We should not equate this with the commitments of developed countries to provide financing and technology. Also partnerships alone will not be able to combat climate change.

Greater emphasis on South-South cooperation in areas like adaptation would be useful. India would be happy to share with our friends in the developing world, the S&T expertise and capacities that India has built over the years.

Mr. President,

India is very conscious of the challenge of climate change and the serious impact it will have on all of us. Yet, like other developing countries, we have to ensure accelerated and sustained development so that millions of poor people can secure a better life. This will inevitably require increased energy consumption. Nevertheless, we have stated that even as we pursue development, our per capita GHG emissions would at no stage exceed the per capita GHG emissions of developed countries. Our per capita emissions of 1 ton per annum are only a fourth of the world average, and our cumulative historical emissions of 23 tons is a fraction compared to the 1100 tons emitted by many developed countries.

At the inauguration on 11 February 2008, Mayor Bloomberg asked China and India to accept world energy efficiency standards and said that in future New York taxis would be flexi fuel. All polluting factories around Delhi have been closed down and all Delhi buses and taxis have switched to using Compressed Natural Gas. Thus, we have done what New York still has to do. As for energy efficiency, a recently released World Bank study shows that India's fossil fuel related carbon dioxide emission per dollar of GDP is the same as that of Japan

and Germany and newer Indian plants in steel, cement, aluminium and paper have energy efficiencies at the global frontier. Recently India's Ministry of Science and Technology has introduced a technology based on ocean thermal energy conversion that provides clean drinking water from seawater at affordable prices.

India is also entirely sensitive to the concerns of Small Island Developing States that arise out of climate change and will join vigorously in efforts to assist them.

Actions by developed countries to sharply reduce their emissions, and assist developing countries with financial and technical resources, holds the key to successfully combating climate change. We look forward to the United Nations and the world working meaningfully towards this goal.

Thank you, Mr. President

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