



Statement of Hon Udaya Gammanpila, Minister of Agriculture, Agrarian Development, Minor Irrigation, Industries and Environment, Western Province, Sri Lanka to the 19th Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change and the 9th Session of the Conference of Parties serving as a Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol

21st November 2013 - Warsaw, Poland

Mr President of COP19 and CMP9
Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC
Excellencies
Distinguished delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a pleasure and a privilege for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka. At the outset, let me extend our heartfelt greetings and well wishes to the Government and people of Poland for hosting and organizing this important conference in this historical magnificent city – Warsaw, in an excellent manner, and also for their warm reception and hospitality.

Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The most of the speakers of this august assembly did not forget to refer to recent *Typhoon Haiyan* which devastated a region of Philippines. All of us genuinely mourned and conveyed our condolences to the government and people of the Philippines. However, I have a question to pose ourselves. Can our condolences stop repetition of this kind of disasters? Can our emotional speeches at this conference stop climate change induced by global warming? The answer to these questions is big NO.

If our condolences and speeches can stop disasters caused by global warming, there will be no such disasters at all. We have talked and mourned enough to stop all climatic calamities. Our speeches have made the global community fully aware of the adverse consequences of emission of Green House Gases. Our mourning has boosted morale of the global community to cope with

such disasters. However, our speeches and mourning have no capacity to arrest ever increasing global warming. Hence, we need action instead of talks. Unfortunately, we are very weak in reaching consensus to take action. Therefore, we are subject to criticism over lack of action. The entire world is eagerly looking at us expecting us to formulate a lifesaving formula for arresting the global warming.

Mr President,

Storms, floods, tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are historically known as natural disasters. However, those should now be identified as manmade disasters as the relationship between global warming and emission of greenhouse gases has now been established clearly and scientifically. In this backdrop, tens of thousands of deaths caused by so called natural disasters are not mere deaths but murders committed by us who failed to formulate a plan to mitigate carbon emissions. High carbon emission nations are more responsible than others for these deaths. "Deaths" is of course a diplomatic term we use here to identify murders.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights has recognized basic rights of any human being. The supreme right among these human rights is right to life. High carbon emitting nations have grossly violated this fundamental human right of all human beings. Although these nations point fingers at other nations for human right violations, they should realize that when they point a finger at others, three fingers have been pointed to themselves.

Mr President,

We appreciate the fact that leading economies in the West are in a recession. We appreciate the fact that green solutions are expensive and difficult to afford in a recessionary atmosphere. However, we should also understand that we do not have much time to take corrective actions to global warming. The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change released in the last September says that If people continue to emit greenhouse gases at current rates, the accumulation of carbon in the atmosphere could mean that within as little as two to three decades the world would face nearly inevitable warming of more than 2°C, resulting disastrous climatic conditions.

Mr President,

Although Sri Lanka was able to triple its per capita income within last eight years, its per capita carbon emission is still less than one metric ton. In fact, we have now become a sustainable development model for the rest of developing nations to follow. Although we have taken all steps to ensure sustainable economic development, we still face a lot of disasters caused by global warming.

Saline intrusions due to sea level rise, frequent floods and droughts, spread of vector based diseases in an unprecedented manner are among the adverse consequences of global warming. After achieving our development goals with minimum damage to the environment, we still have to face these disasters. We suffer for the sins committed by somebody else. Hundreds of thousands of people died in the recent past because of manmade disasters such as Typhoon in Philippines, tsunami in Indonesia, earthquake in Pakistan and droughts in African continent.

The nature does not recognize manmade national boundaries. For the nature, entire earth is interconnected, interwoven and interdependent one unit. That is why one nation has to suffer for another nation's sins. Therefore, entire global community should be united, under the leadership of the United Nations, to formulate an effective solution for the global warming.

Mr President,

We are still optimistic that under your noble leadership, we will be able to formulate a solution. It may be noteworthy that we have been failing to formulate an effective solution to mitigate carbon emissions for the last sixteen years after signing Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Unless we are ready to sacrifice and compromise to formulate a carbon emission mitigating program, our grandchildren will be the last human generation on this Earth.

Thank you very much.

