

Statement by Hon. Sam Kutesa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda at the High-level Dialogue on Climate Change

THEMATIC PLENARY II

on

Mitigation “Reducing Emissions And Stabilizing The Climate – Safeguarding Our Common Future”

Honourable Co-Chairs,
Honorable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen

The overall theme of this High-Level event speaks for itself: *“The Future In Our Hands; Addressing The Leadership Challenge Of Climate Change”*. The future of our planet is at stake. It is only ourselves who can save from the looming catastrophe. While there is still a window of opportunity, we need to act quickly to reduce emissions and stabilize the climate. For that we need strong, determined and committed leadership at all levels to act decisively and to act now. The economic and social costs of not acting now will be an unaffordable.

Honourable Co-Chairs,

Extreme weather and climate events that we are witnessing today testify to the serious nature of the climate change problem we are facing. For example, in Uganda we are now going through unprecedented floods that we can describe as the worst in our history. The eastern part of the country has been cut off. Bridges have been washed away and roads rendered impassable. The floods have created a state of emergency in the areas affected. Note that these floods are following a period of prolonged drought in East Africa and the Greater Horn of Africa with devastating effect all over.

It is the occurrence of extreme events like these that signifies the urgency for action and the need for leadership that we are looking for here. Scientific studies have confirmed beyond reasonable doubts the causes of global warming. The IPCC observed that the largest growth in greenhouse gas emissions has come from energy supply and consumption, and road transport. At the same time, access to energy is crucial for achieving the MDGs, and is one of the over-riding concerns of developing countries, since economic growth demands increased or more efficient energy supply and

consumption. If this will mean that global energy demand will continue to grow, then we must expect the present condition to worsen.

Uganda welcomes the Secretary General's move to convene this High-level event on the eve of the General Assembly because we believe that there is still time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, if we take strong action now and that the benefits of strong and early action far outweigh the economic costs of not acting. Actions on climate change are required across all countries and across major emitting sectors by both developed and developing countries. But the actions need not cap the aspirations for growth especially of poor developing countries.

Uganda is a signatory to the UN Convention on Climate Change and has ratified all its protocols. In the effort to fulfill her obligations under the convention, Uganda has carried out studies that have been useful in the preparation of detailed national reports. Although Uganda has not yet completed the process of developing concrete national strategies for mitigation and adaptation, the output of the successful studies carried out are already guiding implementation of the convention. What we now need to achieve wider dissemination of the study outputs. The next step is to mainstream mitigation activities into national sustainable development priorities.

Honourable Co-Chairs,

I would like to state that it is Uganda's strong belief that technology holds the key to combating the causes and effects of climate change. It plays a critical role in the mitigation and adaptation process the world over. Development, diffusion and assimilation of appropriate technology is of particular importance for the climate change process especially in developing countries. There are mitigation technologies that developing countries can use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions without adversely affecting their development.

The Government of Uganda also believes that success in the use of technology can not be achieved without the involvement of the private sector which is our key partners in the mitigation activities. Since the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) opened the window for private sector participation and created low cost opportunities to cut back emission, Uganda has been trying to build technical capacity to take full advantage of the CDM process.

However, our great concern still remains with the way access to technology by developing countries continues to be limited by policies applied by industrialized countries in form of disguised barriers to trade. Secondly with regard to CDM its operational procedures are still complex and cumbersome. This tends to discourage investors, particularly small-scale enterprises that are dominant in our developing economies.

Financing conditionality for poor countries is a further disincentive for the participation of the private sector. Poor developing countries should not face financial conditionality on CDM. Instead they need financial assistance to support development of CDM projects. Urgent policy action is needed to rectify this situation so that developing countries can enjoy free and fair access to technology for mitigation and necessary adaptation.

Honourable Co-chairs,

There is significant potential for mitigation, including increasing the use of clean technologies and improving end-use efficiency. Some of the available mitigation options are in fact opportunities that can yield multiple societal and environmental benefits. However, we must ensure that mitigation measures in developed countries do not impact negatively on the economies of developing country oil exporting nations.

The wide deployment of climate-friendly technologies is key to meeting the mitigation challenges. Specific actions for addressing mitigation should include:

- Deeper greenhouse gas emission reductions by industrialized countries and participation of developing countries in emission reductions;
- Political commitment to promote and facilitate access to cheap affordable technologies by developing nations,
- Development and diffusion of mitigation and adaptation technologies;
- Adequate financial resources to facilitate access to technology and implement practical mitigation and adaptation activities, particularly in LDCs and Small Island Developing States.
- Continued and increased efforts to explore innovative approaches to reduce emissions.

Industrialised countries should take the lead in emissions reduction as stipulated under the Climate Change Convention. In support of their action, we, call on big economy developing countries to take actions to reduce their emissions as well. These actions can be taken by these developing countries without sacrificing their development goals as the Stern Review has clearly indicated.

Honourable Co-Chairs,

Effective actions to address the mitigation challenge must be taken at both global and national levels but based on shared but differentiated responsibility and understanding of long-term goals as well as concrete agreement on a framework of action. Without strong commitment to climate change at the global level, actions at national levels will have no impact. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol provides the basis for a global response. The Bali Conference on Climate Change is crucial. Through this High-level event we must give to our delegates to Bali our political commitment to negotiate broader commitments on climate change.

I thank you.