



SAARC Workshop

Climate Change and Disasters: Emerging Trends and Future Strategies



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SAARC Environment Ministers Dhaka Declaration on Climate Change

Dhaka, 3 July 2008

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We the Ministers of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, having met at Dhaka, Bangladesh on 3 July 2008 at the Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change,

Renewing our commitment to the SAARC Declaration on Climate Change adopted by the Twenty-ninth session of the Council of Ministers held on 7th December 2007 in New Delhi, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the provisions of Agenda 21, the Declaration made at Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development together with the outcomes and action plan adopted at the Summit,

Considering that climate change is substantively the result of the GHG emissions by the developed world for over two centuries, now posing as a direct threat to sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the developing countries, which have little or no responsibility for the current process of climate change,

Further considering that economic and social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, and are essential for food security and a better quality of life that is in serious jeopardy due to the disasters caused by climate change,

Recognizing that the SAARC region is most vulnerable to climate change and thereby seriously affecting our agricultural production, crippling our vital infrastructures, diminishing our natural resources and limiting our development options for the future,

Considering also that the aforesaid changes may threaten biodiversity, rendering the livelihood of our people to serious risk, hindering the achievement of the MDGs, and thwarting sustained economic growth that is essential to survive in the present globalized economy,

Recognizing that sustainable development is the best and most appropriate way to address the threat of climate change and accelerating the process of development is essential in order to build up capacity in the region to cope with likely adverse effects of climate change.

Acknowledging the importance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the progress made in the thirteenth Conference of the Parties held in Bali, Indonesia in December 2007 with the adoption of the decisions commonly called the *Bali Road Map including the Bali Action Plan* with its four building blocks – Mitigation, Adaptation, Technology Transfer, and Finance and Investment,

Acknowledging also that the Member States of the SAARC region, while safeguarding their interest through mutual consultations to meet the challenges posed by climate change,

Being aware of the diversity and commonality of interest in the economy, culture, and natural-resource-endowments of the SAARC region, that contain the high mountain

ranges with their unique ecosystems, low lying areas, and Small Island States, hills and mountains that offer livelihood for the people, the vast ocean and the seas, the richly endowed biodiversity resources that include the coral reefs and the mangroves, the rocky and sandy deserts, numerous rivers and estuaries that offer livelihood opportunities to millions of our people, which are to be protected for the present and the future generations,

Noting the urgency of the immediate need for dealing with the onslaught of climate change including sea level rise, on meeting food, water and energy needs, and taking measures to ensure the livelihood security of our peoples in the SAARC region,

Having regard to the needs of our countries to initiate programmes for adaptation measures to diverse impacts of climate change, monitoring, early warning, disaster management, capacity building and other measures, which, if pursued collectively, will synergize the outcomes of national efforts, and international cooperation, which are essential in this regard,

Also noting the positive steps taken in terms of awareness raising on the environment over the years that could benefit future measures for adaptation in the present expected scenario of climate change, and other such steps for further upgrading our efforts with appropriate human resources development and cooperation with civil society and academia, that exists within our region,

Make the following declaration:

1. *Commit* ourselves to promote programmes for advocacy and mass awareness raising on climate change and to inculcate habits towards a low carbon society, including incorporation of climate change and related science-based educational material in educational curricula, as per SAARC procedure and practices.
2. *Resolve* to cooperate on climate change issues for capacity building, including the development of CDM projects and DNA and on incentives for removal of GHG by sinks, and exchange of information of best practices, sharing of the results of research and development for mitigating the effects of climate change and undertaking adaptation measures, and for enhancing south-south cooperation on technology development and transfer, as per established SAARC norms.
3. *Agree* to initiate and implement programmes and measures as per SAARC practice for adaptation for dealing with the onslaught of climate change to protect the lives and livelihood of our people for food, water and energy securities and call upon Annex-I countries to fulfill their commitments as per UNFCCC for providing additional resources.
4. *Further commit* ourselves to implement the SAARC Action Plan on Climate Change.
5. *Adopt* this Declaration and the SAARC Action Plan on Climate Change.
