

## **Intervention by Prime Minister on Climate Change at CHOGM**

27/11/2009

Mr. Chairman,

Let me express my deep appreciation to your Excellency and the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago for the wonderful hospitality and warm friendship extended to my delegation and to me personally since our arrival in your beautiful island country. Excellency, you are hosting the Commonwealth Summit at a very critical juncture, in particular, as regards the challenge of global climate change. We are only days away from the convening of the 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen. Our special session this afternoon, devoted to Climate Change, is therefore, particularly opportune. It enables us to send a powerful political message to Copenhagen so as to ensure an ambitious, substantive and equitable outcome.

I welcome the participation of His Excellency, the Prime Minister of Denmark. His perspective on the multilateral negotiations is particularly useful. I wish to assure him that my delegation will play a constructive and positive role and support all his efforts to secure a successful outcome.

President Sarkozy's presence at our deliberations adds to their quality. We have benefited from his insights and his wisdom and, in particular, his concern over the challenges posed to developing countries by Climate Change.

His Excellency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has played a key role in raising awareness of the dangers posed by Climate Change to humanity and has repeatedly stressed the need for urgency in our actions. We agree with his assessment that the time for action is now.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to express India's complete solidarity with the sentiments expressed by several leaders from Small Island Developing States and our brothers from Africa. They are the least responsible for climate change and yet are the most vulnerable to its impact. Their very survival is at stake. We appreciate their concern because India, too, has extensive island territories and low lying coastal plains, which are vulnerable to sea-level rise and extreme climatic events. We have modest resources at our disposal but we are willing to share whatever we have to build adaptive capacity among the least developed countries and the Small Island Developing States.

Mr. Chairman, let me share with you and my colleagues assembled here India's perspective on the forthcoming Conference of Parties in Copenhagen.

The multilateral negotiations under the UNFCCC have been proceeding on two parallel tracks for the past two years. The first track derives its mandate from the Bali Action Plan adopted by consensus in December, 2007. Its mandate for the multilateral negotiations is very clear and unambiguous. We are to work towards an Agreed Outcome at Copenhagen which would represent enhanced implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Bali Action Plan calls for

enhanced implementation specifically in respect of mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology. And why was it necessary to enhance implementation in these respects? Precisely because the provisions of the UNFCCC had barely been implemented and in the meantime, the threat of Climate Change had become more compelling than had been envisaged when the Rio Convention was concluded in 1992. Therefore, if the outcome at Copenhagen diminishes rather than enhances the implementation of the UNFCCC in respect of the specific components of mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology, it would represent a serious setback, no matter how we seek to characterize this result.

A view has been expressed that given the limited amount of time available, we should aim for a political outcome rather than a legally binding outcome. Our view is that we should not pre-empt the Copenhagen negotiating process. Whatever time is still available to us before the High Level Segment meets from December 16, should be used to achieve as much convergence as possible. If the consensus is that only a political document is feasible then we must make certain that the post-Copenhagen process continues to work on the Bali mandate and the UNFCCC continues to be the international template for global climate action. We must avoid any lowering of sights.

Mr. Chairman, India has repeatedly emphasized the need for the Copenhagen outcome to be comprehensive, balanced and above all, equitable. It must be comprehensive in the sense that it must cover all the inter-related components of mitigation, adaptation, finance and technology. This means we should resist a partial outcome. Furthermore, there must be balance and equal priority given to each of the 4 components. Mitigation is important but cannot take precedence over adaptation which, for many countries represented here, poses a greater challenge. And most important from our perspective, is the need to ensure an equitable outcome corresponding to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. India is willing to sign on to an ambitious global target for emissions reductions or limiting temperature increase but this must be accompanied by an equitable burden sharing paradigm. We acknowledge the imperative of science but science must not trump equity. Climate Change action based on the perpetuation of poverty will simply not be sustainable.

I would like to emphasise that Climate Change is a challenge of global dimensions. It deserves a global and a collaborative response. It is unfortunate that the global discourse on Climate Change has become enmeshed with arguments about maintaining economic competitiveness or level playing fields. Climate Change is becoming the pretext for pursuing protectionist policies under a green label. This would be contrary to the UNFCCC and a violation of the WTO as well. India and other developing countries will strongly resist this.

Before I conclude, I wish to say a few words about the second track in the multilateral negotiations, which is the Kyoto Protocol track. Contrary to impressions which have been mistakenly circulated, the Kyoto Protocol will not expire in 2012. 2012 marks the end of the first commitment period for developed country parties to fulfill their legally binding obligations to reduce their economy-wide emissions by a specific quantified figure. The negotiations under way are to review progress achieved in meeting the targets by 2012 and to sign on to more significant obligations in the second

commitment period commencing in 2013. Despite the efforts of the developing country parties to the Protocol, no progress has been achieved in fulfilling the mandate of the Working Group on Kyoto Protocol, which has been meeting for the past three years. The attempts by some countries to dispense with the Kyoto Protocol altogether has generated avoidable misgivings and has been strongly resisted by all developing countries without exception. We hope that a legally valid instrument to which we too are parties, will not be set aside in a cavalier manner. This will undermine credibility in any future legally binding instrument.

Mr. Chairman, India has adopted an ambitious National Action Plan on Climate Change with 8 National Mission covering both mitigation and adaptation. We have not made their implementation conditional upon obtaining international support. However, we can certainly do more if there is a supportive global regime. Each of the National Missions, including those on renewable energy, enhancing energy efficiency and expanding forest cover, are platforms on which we would be happy to pursue cooperative partnership with sister Commonwealth countries.

We welcome the proposal made by Prime Minister Gordon Brown for the mobilization of at least \$ 100 billion by 2020 for supporting climate change action in developing countries. We also welcome the priority he has given to the needs of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. However, much of this finance is market-based and hence subject to market volatility and unpredictability. We can hardly plan long-term action on this basis. Furthermore, adaptation requirements do not lend themselves to market based finance.

I thank you for your attention

Port of Spain

November 27, 2009