

**Statement by His Excellency Durga P. Bhattarai, Permanent Representative of
Nepal to the United Nations, at the Seventh Session of the UNGA Open Working
Group on SDGs, on the theme “*climate change and disaster risk reduction*”
10 January 2014, New York**

As delivered

Mr. Co-chair,

I am speaking in my national capacity and I associate my statement with the statements made by the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Benin on behalf of G77 and China, and LDCs respectively. I also thank the panelists who shared with us their experience and wisdom yesterday and today.

There is no doubt that climate change and disasters affect all sectors, all economies and all countries. Nobody is immune from the adverse effects of climate change. As we are deliberating on the framework of Sustainable Development Goals, the global commons are increasingly confronting critical challenges of biodiversity loss, chemical risk, water scarcity, pollution, deforestation, environmental degradation and a host of other problems caused by climate change and disasters.

Mr. Co-chair,

Countries like Nepal, which is a land-locked and least developed country with a high cost economy, have to bear the brunt of climate change more disproportionately, in sharp contrast to their negligible contribution to the emission of greenhouse gases. Nepal is the 5th most vulnerable country in terms of climate change, 11th in terms of earthquake induced disaster risks, 13th in terms of disaster risks, 20th in terms of multiple disaster risks and 30th in terms of water induced disaster risks. The multiple vulnerabilities and resulting compound effects critically threaten our livelihoods, lives and civilizations. The resulting cost of living, livelihoods, infrastructure and resources is escalating as never before.

As a mountainous country with rich biodiversity and snow-capped peaks in the Himalayas, Nepal is facing additional burden of climate change impact in terms of melting of glaciers and climatic disasters. The hastened melting of snow in the Himalayas of Nepal has not only been affecting sources of fresh water for hundreds of millions of people living in South Asia, but also contributing to the rise of sea level, which poses existential threats to several island states and territories. About two dozen of our glacial lakes are in the verge of outburst any time , which would cause huge loss of lives and property. Changing weather patterns have started affecting agricultural production and food security across the entire South Asian region. The worst suffers include the poorest

and marginalised sections of populations, more importantly women and children, among them.

Nepal's world-class cultural heritage, rich bio-diversity, natural flora and fauna, scenic beauty and cultural identities and the livelihood of the people are damaged with the recurring and rising droughts, untimely and uneven rain patterns, early or delayed monsoon (on which most of our agriculture depends) and other unusual weather patterns, flash floods, landslides, and the resulting desertification, loss of agricultural land, and food insecurity. The Government of Nepal has accorded top priority to addressing climate change and disaster risk reduction and has integrated these areas in our national development plans and policies with clear programs and strategies.

Our efforts are focused on highlighting the need for additional resources, increased technical cooperation, and assisting community initiatives for a sustainable livelihood, mainly with a view to securing adaptation vis-à-vis from the threats of climate change. We also have opportunities for carbon trading and "clean development mechanism". We could also make use of various global funds, including the LDC Fund, available in the area of climate change to meet our funding needs. But, the operationalization of these funds to benefit the most vulnerable countries like ours has remained a big challenge.

Mr. Co-chair,

Climate change affects socio-economic development process and disproportionately adds burden on the poorest and most vulnerable countries that have limited resources, capacity and technological strength to confront it effectively. Therefore, in the upcoming SDG framework, we strongly support the inclusion of an ambitious adaptation and mitigation goal. We would also appreciate a goal on ensuring Green Climate Fund fully functioning in support of LDCs' sustainable development initiatives. The 'Sustainable Energy for All' initiative deserves full consideration in this configuration. Energy access, energy efficiency and share of renewable energy in total energy mix should find a prominent place in the SDGs if we are to make a much needed progress on global sustainability agenda.

Effective implementation of Convention on Biological Diversity is equally critical in reversing the loss of biodiversity, building resilience of eco-systems, and contributing to human wellbeing and poverty eradication. We are in favour of effective implementation of Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and, in our view, the Aichi biodiversity targets should be duly integrated in the SDG framework with a commitment to fulfilling enhanced human, technical and financial resources to developing countries, especially the LDCs, to this end.

Desertification, land degradation and drought are also the pressing global challenges of our time that have a significant bearing on sustainable development. It is critical that some goals in this field are incorporated in order to promote comprehensive global support for the implementation of UNCCD.

Mr. Co-chair,

It is but natural that global sustainability cannot be contemplated without addressing climate change comprehensively with the goal of binding emission commitments as well as an enhanced, predictable and easy access of financing to the most vulnerable countries for effective implementation of appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures. The proposed SDGs should encompass ambitious goals and targets that strongly support Kyoto Protocol and should include deeper commitments to cut green house gas emissions by the developed countries and those countries which have highest per capita emission. The SDGs should also incorporate fast-track financing for mitigation, adaptation, transfer of technology, REDD and capacity-building, together with ensuring transparency and predictability in resource allocation as well as equitable voice and representation of the most vulnerable countries in the related governance mechanisms.

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is also the priority agenda of global community and should be built into the post-Hyogo Framework of Action. Enhanced international support is necessary to meet the huge investment need of developing countries in reducing disaster risks and building resilience. We emphasize on ensuring effective coordination at all levels in dealing with disaster risk reduction. In the forthcoming SDG framework, all these aspects of DRR should be duly reflected.

In conclusion, climate change and DRR are global issues and require global attention and solution. Without addressing these challenges, our efforts to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication would not bring about tangible development outcomes. Consequently, this would endanger the very survival of the present and future generations. It is imperative that 'climate change' and 'disaster risk reduction' are placed at the centre stage of the forthcoming SDG framework with due consideration of unique challenges faced by the LDCs, LLDCs and mountainous countries like Nepal in this respect.

I thank you, Co-chair.