

**STATEMENT BY MR. RUDOLPH S. KUUZEGH, DIRECTOR OF  
ENVIRONMENT, MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT TO THE IPM FOR THE FIFTEENTH  
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Mr. Chairman,

My Delegation associates itself with the position already articulated by Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and we also commend the Secretary-General for his report on this subject.

Many delegations have already underscored the fact that climate change has now assumed centre stage on the international development agenda and many others have indicated their commitment to address the uncertainties and general challenges that climate change poses to our collective efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Climate Change is a real threat to both the rich and the poor. The challenges posed by the phenomenon in our part of the world, and Ghana in particular, are enormous and further retards the national strive to reduce poverty. Poverty in Ghana is indexed by district, gender and age. It is a fact of our everyday life that the ecological zones of our country which are less endowed with natural resources are also the ones which have the greatest incidence of poverty.

Again, it is recognized that women are the most vulnerable when national and district poverty statistics are brought into focus. It is in this regard that we urge countries in similar situations and the international community to fashion out strategies and conduct gender impact analyses to identify mitigation and adaptation needs of women in particular. We believe that governments and other relevant institutions must involve women at all levels of decision making on climate change to take advantage of their special skills in natural resource management.

Sustainable development is also about addressing generational inequities and development gaps. The present trend of climate change does not only endanger the future of our planet but it is also a recipe for uncertainty and disaster for future generations.

Lack of, or weak climate observation systems and networks in Africa, inadequate knowledge of climate change to the broad masses of our people, inadequate climate change policy and adaptation measures in our national development strategies, means of implementation are but a few of the worrisome phenomena that must engage our minds in this forum, and subsequently, in the main CSD-15

In Ghana, we may not talk of melting ice as a hot topic and therefore as a direct challenge, yet the impact of climate change is clearly manifested in various ways such as coastal erosion, land degradation, drought and desertification, loss of biodiversity and the general vagaries of the weather leading to poor agricultural yields and food insecurity.

Addressing climate change, as with energy, industrial development and air pollution, involves cross cutting, multi-sectoral and transboundary issues as the effects of climate change generate complex interactions between the environment as well as, economic and social issues. In tune with Agenda 21, the JPoI, The UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, sixteen countries along the Gulf of Guinea have with the support of UNIDO established the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystems Project (GCLME) with a leading role by the Government of Ghana to address the coastal environmental needs of this long stretch of coastline prone to many forms of degradation arising from climate change effect.

I am happy to announce that this project has now been transformed into the Interim Guinea Current Commission. With these joint efforts many coastal settlements would be saved their habitations, other marine and coastal life systems will be preserved, thereby safeguarding small and medium scale enterprises such as fishing and related enterprises, in which most of our women along the coastline are engaged. It also underscores the need for transboundary partnerships in finding solutions, however modest, to stem impending transnational problems for mutual benefit.

As with many other issues of national importance to us, Ghana continues to select and develop indicators for sustainable development within the broader framework of the methodology set out by CSD. Over the past few years we have also revised our sustainable development strategies to engender economic stability and civil governance in our country- a situation which is unprecedented in our fifty years history as an independent nation. The end result of these efforts coupled with a compact to improve the lives of Ghanaians has been the substantial economic growth, appreciable social development which we believe, if sustained, will eventually help our poverty eradication efforts, and ultimately the country's overall aim to becoming a middle income country by 2015.