



PAKISTAN

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STATEMENT BY
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GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN, IN THE
FOURTEENTH SESSION OF COMMISSION ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

New York
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Statement by Mr. Iftikhar A. Arain, Additional Foreign Secretary, Government of Pakistan, in the Fourteenth Session of Commission on Sustainable Development (May 01, 2006)

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to extend, on behalf of Pakistan delegation, our warmest felicitations to you and to the Bureau of CSD-14 on the assumption of your responsibilities.

2. The Fourteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, will carry out a review of the progress made in the further implementation of the Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in the thematic cluster on “Energy, Industrial Development, Air pollution/atmosphere and Climate Change”.

3. We are grateful to the Secretariat for presenting a set of comprehensive reports on the issues before us during this review session of the implementation cycle 2006-2007. The reports would indeed facilitate a focused and productive exchange.

4. Our discussions this year under the thematic cluster on “Energy, climate change, industrial development and air pollution”, are very timely and topical for a host of reasons, namely:

First, the physical reality of environmental issues has become evident more than ever before. The notion that “environmental processes are governed by nature not international policy has become painfully evident. Consequently, there is a widespread recognition that the danger to the planet’s environment is far greater today than it was before.

Second, the progress towards the goal of achieving sustainable development, as described by the Secretary General, is at best mixed and limited, with large pockets of poverty in regions and countries still persisting.

Third, the unprecedented increase in the energy prices have provoked concerns over energy security and placed a question mark on the sustainability of the progress made by the developing countries towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals including MDGs.

Fourth, important and welcome commitments towards the enhancement of ODA and grant of debt relief have been made. Similarly, progress has also been made in exploring new and innovative sources of financing.

Five, important consultative processes including the Secretary General's High Level Panel on System wide coherence and the General Assembly Consultations on Environment are going on, which may have a bearing on existing institutional arrangements for environmental activities.

Mr. Chairman,

5. We are confident that our deliberations this year would generate serious and in depth policy discussions that should help build a better common understanding on how best to face the global environmental challenges and to optimally exploit the existing opportunities.

6. Energy, industrial development, air pollution and climate change, in addition to being closely inter linked, have an important and critical bearing on sustainable economic growth and development. Addressing, in an integrated manner, the sustainable development challenges relating to these issues can serve to enhance synergies, help seize win-win opportunities and minimize trade-offs where they exist.

7. Pakistan strongly feels that addressing environmental degradation together with eliminating poverty, collectively, urgently and effectively is a contemporary imperative.

8. We are increasingly conscious that pursuit of growth and development has placed a heavy burden on sustainability. Over the last decade, we have made significant progress in Pakistan in developing the environmental policy and regulatory frameworks, development of environmental institutions and raising awareness.

9. We have advanced the environmental agenda from being seen as a stand-alone topic to the one that identifies itself as an integral element of the national mainstream development agenda. Our Medium Term Development Framework (MTDF) seeks to establish a just and sustainable economic system and achieving Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Our "National Environmental Policy 2005" provides an overarching framework for achieving the goals of sustainable development. The Policy aims to improve the quality of life of people of Pakistan through conservation, protection and improvement of the country's environment and effective cooperation among government agencies, civil society, private sector and other stake holders. Furthermore, Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) and the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) have been made mandatory for the public sector development projects. Some of the other relevant strategies and plans, to be elaborated further in individual sub-clusters discussions, include National Response Strategy on Climate Change, Environmental accounting and auditing: Agro-eco-zoning, Fuel switching.

11. Yet unfortunately, the degradation of environment, continues affecting livelihoods and health as well as increasing vulnerability of the poor to disasters and environment-related conflicts. The current cost of environmental degradation is considerably higher. An assessment by the World Bank estimated the total cost of remediation at 2.6 percent of the GDP.

12. Availability of adequate funding and resources was and remains a significant challenge and a major constraint in effectively addressing global environmental challenges. The recent commitments to enhance ODA flows and to grant debt relief, welcome as they are, need to be implemented at the earliest. There is also a need and a strong case for considering their consolidation and expansion to cover other deserving developing countries, particularly in case of debt relief measures. Trade market access through the early and development-oriented completion of the Doha Round of Trade, access to new and environmentally friendly technologies on concessional terms, including renewable energy technologies, technical assistance for capacity building, and investment in infrastructure are the other important measures that would help developing countries generate the much needed fiscal space and additional resources to implement their national development strategies in a sustainable manner.

I thank you.
