



PAKISTAN

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STATEMENT

BY

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MINISTER OF STATE

FOR ENVIRONMENT OF PAKISTAN IN THE

HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF

FOURTEENTH SESSION OF COMMISSION

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD-14)

New York
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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Malik Amin Aslam, Minister of State
for Environment of Pakistan in the High Level Segment of
Fourteenth Session of Commission on Sustainable Development
(CSD-14) May 11, 2006**

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me at the very outset thank you for your able stewardship of the deliberations during the Fourteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

2. Pakistan wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of South Africa on behalf of the G-77 and China.

3. In the past week, we have had rich discussions on “Energy, climate change, industrial development and air pollution”, all of which are strongly interlinked with each other and deeply impact the issue of sustainable development.

4. Much that we would like to think otherwise, the fact of the matter is that poverty is still rampant globally and on the rise in some countries and regions, natural resources are depleting at a rapid pace while natural disasters and pressures on environment are increasing. What is becoming increasingly, and uncomfortably, apparent is that environmental issues are driven by the forces of nature and not by global politics. The impacts of issues such as climate change, desertification and air pollution are evidently upon us and are not waiting for the politics to entangle or the economics to optimize. Moreover, they are now manifesting themselves with increasingly high and unpredictable costs – borne, in most cases, by some of the most underdeveloped countries of the world. Clearly, the situation demands a renewed and enhanced commitment for concerted actions based on concrete plans.

5. The leaders at the 2005 World Summit reaffirmed their commitment to achieving sustainable development through the implementation of agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation by undertaking concrete actions and measures at all levels.

6. However, to date, implementation has been the Achilles heel of the global development agenda. The world showed tremendous stewardship in reaching global consensus on a number of critical agreements such as the MEA's, the MDG's and the overall Agenda-21. Unfortunately, this collective stewardship has not translated into local action on the ground. The biggest challenge of sustainability remains implementation – ironically the implementation of what has already been globally agreed to. Thus, this present commitment to focus on implementation is, therefore, very essential and timely.

7. This commitment has to get transformed into a concrete action plan supported by a cohesive and coordinated institutionalized structure and driven by targeted time tables – most importantly it has to be packaged with adequate and predictable funding. This path to sustainability is common sense but as they say “common sense remains the most uncommon commodity”.

8. Secondly, the role of the private sector as a driver for sustainable development has to be seriously explored and fully supported. This is especially critical for the investments in the energy sector. If we are to ensure that the future global growth occurs on a cleaner and low-carbon trajectory we have to incentivise the private sector and make them the custodians and guardians of a sustainable growth.

9. This requires a shift in paradigms. Fortunately, it is a shift, which is already taking place. The global carbon market, incentivised through the Kyoto market based instruments and driven by the private sector is beginning to show positive results. Last year, the market grew to a size of about \$ 10 billion and almost one third of this occurred through the Clean Development Mechanism – the size of which was almost \$3billion. This money flowed into cleaner industrial investments, renewables, efficiency enhancements and landfill gas projects. The flow of money through the CDM alone in one year was more than the global multilateral annual flows into the environment sector. The first CDM project that came to Pakistan last month is almost 50% of our national environmental budget. The stimulus to the private sector is thus working in the climate arena and this, Mr. Chairman is what we need to do for furthering the global sustainability agenda. Let the private sector be its prime driver and let the Government incentivise and regulate it.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Pakistan is a country which is on a rapid growth trajectory. Last year our economy grew at a rate of 8.4% which was second only to China. As we grow rapidly we are increasingly becoming aware that to translate this economic growth into a better quality of life for our citizens we have to remain conscious of the environmental issues. We realize that development and growth without environmental care is not a sustainable option. The issue of sustainability is no more an element of choice but a necessary pre-requisite for growth leading to a better quality of life.

11. We have advanced the environmental agenda from being a stand-alone topic to one that identifies itself as an integral element of our national mainstream development agenda. Our environmental budget last year saw an increase of 700% and it is now one of the pillars of our future growth with a clear allocation of funds in our five-year MTF. Providing clean drinking water to our population remains a primary target and we are aiming to provide it to 100% of our population by the end of 2007. We have also targeted a growth in CNG for our vehicles and are today the largest user of natural gas vehicles in Asia. Also, we view renewable energy especially wind, solar and hydel as prime drivers of our future growth and are inviting investments through carbon financing for this purpose.

Mr. Chairman,

12. Finally, I would like to state that there is an urgent need to reopen the environmental debate on nuclear energy and large dams. Both of these options have been termed environmental taboo subjects for too long now. The environmental costs, in terms of climate change, of not using these options, where available, is extremely high and has considerably risen in the past decade. In the context of the evidently clear benefits to the climate, it is now becoming imperative to utilize them as possible pillars of an environmentally sustainable future.

I thank you.