

COUNTRY STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY AMBASSADOR PHAE
THANN OO, HEAD OF THE MYANMAR DELEGATION TO THE EU-
ASIAN LDCs +SIDS REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE,
SHERATON HOTEL, DHAKA, 30-31 MAY 2010.

The Honourable Ambassador Arturo Perez Martinez,

The Honourable Secretary Dr. Mihir Kanti Mazumder,

The Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Ambassadors,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our thanks and appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the EU's Global Climate Change Alliance- GCCA for organising this august meeting in a timely manner before UNFCCC Cop-16 in Cancun, Mexico and particularly in Dhaka, one of the capitals of climate change effected countries.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister Her Excellency Sheik Hasina for her successful initiatives on climate change issues since she came to power after a landslide election victory. Today she is playing a leading role on the subject of climate change at different international forums. We appreciate the policy initiatives taken by her on climate change on behalf of our fellow LDCs and SIDS. We welcome her recent statement at the 66th. ESCAP Ministerial Meeting in Seoul, calling for the establishment of Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Climate Change and its earliest and quick disbursement for the LDCS and SIDS.

I would also like to commend the European Union and GCCA for their relentless efforts to support the poor developing countries, in particular the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Development States (SIDS), as they truly are more vulnerable to climate change than other developing countries in the entire world.

Mr. Chairman,

My country, the Union of Myanmar is one of the most effected by climate change among the developing countries. Very recently in 2008 Myanmar was severely hit by the most powerful cyclone Nargis. Nargis landed in Irrawaddy

delta region with sustained winds of 130 mph and gust of 150 mph. Strong winds, flooding, mudslides, and 12 foot high tidal surge were responsible for the loss of lives and damages. As a result almost 140,000 poor people in the countryside were killed; tens of thousands of poor people became homeless and lost their livelihood.

Mr. Chairman,

Today, thanks to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the UNFCCC , majority of people in the world came to realize that climate change is a true fact and reality. The more the scientific data comes out, the more we understand the greater danger threatening to the very existence of our global habitat. In particular in the developing world Climate Change is challenging our National Strategies for sustainable development and moreover to our Millennium Development Goals which consequently hinders our National Plans and strategies to alleviate poverty in our countries.

As Myanmar is an agro-based country, climate change has a dramatic impact on our agricultural and forestry development. Available records by the Department of Hydrology and meteorology for the past 50 years vividly revealed that the onset of Monsoon is becoming late whereas its withdrawal is earlier year after year. As consequence, the number of raining days in Myanmar has reduced from 145 to 105 days on average, over the same year. However, precipitation on average for the said period has not significantly been changed and this proves the statement that rainfall pattern change is occurring in Myanmar. This new pattern of climate change has not only adverse effect on crop growing, but also enhances the chances of natural disasters like Cyclone Nargis and floods and landslides.

Mr. Chairman,

Bearing in mind the challenges posed by issues related to the climate change, global warming, desertification, biodiversity, depletion of ozone layer, etc. the Myanmar Government had set up a National Commission for Environmental Affairs since 1994. Myanmar Ministerial delegation had participated at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED – Earth Summit). Myanmar ratified the UNFCCC in 1994 and subsequently ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 2003. Myanmar is committed to the UNFCCC Programmes and under which implementation of Initial National Communication and National Adaptation Programme is under process.

With the financial assistance from ADB, Myanmar had undertaken Asia Least Gas Abatement Strategy (ALGAS) Project in 1997 and had proven that Myanmar is not a net emitter in the region. Because Myanmar still has about 50 % of forest cover with dense natural forests across the country and Myanmar relatively have less carbon emitting industries. Moreover, successive Governments have been giving special emphasis to the greening projects at the central dry zones of the country since 1954. With a view to implement more effectively, a Dry Zone Greening Department was formed in 1997 and a total of 120,000 acres has been reforested over the period of 12 years from 1994 till 2006. At the same time the Government has been carrying out conservation of the natural forests, replenishing the deforested areas and forming protected areas and wild life sanctuaries for biodiversity conservation. Until now, 0.5 million hectares of forest plantations has been set up and 43 wildlife and natural park were established covering 4% of total country area. This shows Myanmar is serious in addressing climate change issues and attaches great importance to the natural environment and ecosystem prior to its social and economic development.

With regard to environmental legislations, since the founding of the National Commission for Environmental Affairs in 1994 Myanmar had pronounced the Environmental Policy which strongly called to integrate environmental conservation into social and economic development activities. We also had drafted the Environmental Law but yet to be approved.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the big challenges posed by climate change is the scarcity of fresh water. To address this challenge, Myanmar has been constructing dams and reservoirs across Myanmar to harvest rainwater and to generate electric power. Until now, more than 200 dams and reservoirs have been constructed across the country. These Facilities will ensure sufficient water resources for agricultural farming and enabling the country for adequate food production and assuring the food security in the region.

With regard to the preparedness for possible natural disasters, a National Disaster Preparedness Committee headed by the Prime Minister was formed in 2007. There may have a series of problems caused by the global climate change, however, the most important is to integrate the climate change into future socio-economic plans of each and every country. Equally important factor is to

successfully implement the adaptation and mitigation programmes in future. We would like to suggest EU GCCA and other developed countries to provide assistance for capacity building and institutional strengthening in implementing those programmes in our country.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation to the European Union for setting up GCCA and its farsighted view to help promote mitigation and adaptation programmes for the LDCs and SIDS. I am confident that this EU's initiative of GCCA will ensure the achievement of sustainable development in our countries.

Thank you.