

## Opening Ceremony of the Asia-Pacific Adaptation Forum 2012, Bangkok

Thank you chair

Distinguished guests and participants

I am Dipesh Chapagain from Nepal, and participating in this forum as a youth representative. I would like to start with a quote of a farmer from my country:

*“We did not buy seeds. We separated seeds from the present harvest for the next year and following this practice for ages. But something has changed. I have kept 40 kg of seeds and sowed half of it but the seeds dried in the field. Not a single seed germinated. I still have rather less than 10 kg but the family is eating. We have not done this before. Now I am thinking whether I should feed the family or wait for rain. In both cases there will be nothing to eat for the next year.”*

This is just a representative story of millions of poor, vulnerable and marginalized people who are residing in hills and mountains, coastal region and dry areas. In many places, people are struggling for a drop of water whereas there are also areas with flood and landslides causing huge damage of life, property, and infrastructure. The host city itself is experienced the largest flood over 50 years and leads to postpone the event. Recent report quoted in Guardian states that parts of Thailand's capital could be under water by 2030 unless the government takes steps. Hunger and food insecurity is increasing, disasters are more frequent and severe, glaciers are melting rapidly and glacial lakes are on the verge of outbursts that would cause disasters downstream. There is little pristine wilderness left; biodiversity is under severe threat, and new diseases and epidemics are appearing. These various global changes interact with climate and already are inducing migration forcing many young people to move in search of better future.

I believe that all of us are gathered here to discuss and find some ways to cope and adapt with the climate change – the biggest challenge of our generation. As a young citizen from a Least Developed Country and representing the voice of youths, I would like to raise some concerns on climate change adaptation.

The global climate change negotiations that have been running since 1992 have not delivered the real and meaningful outcomes due to weak political commitment of global leaders. Rather, the problems and threats have grown for all the living creatures in this earth.

We believe that the issue of climate change is principally the issues of sustainability, equity, justice and right to survival with north-south and intergenerational dimension. Those countries who have not contributed to the causes are suffering the most and are in the major need of adaptation. We, the young people are finding our future more uncertain and unpredictable. The future generation may not find this earth livable. Therefore, based on the principal of equity and justice, developed countries must compensate to the countries whose contributions to climate change is negligible, to the young who inherit these problems and the next generation who have not even been born.

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UNFCCC estimates a need for 28–67 billion USD annually by 2030 for the climate change adaptation. However, the reality is different - the funding pledged and deposited for the climate change adaptation in different fund at present is nearly empty. Till date, 46 LDCs have prepared their NAPA to identify the urgent and immediate needs to adapt to the climate change. But, all the LDCs are struggling to implement it due to the lack of financial support.

We, the youths from the region gathered in Kathmandu, Nepal on 8 to 12<sup>th</sup> August 2011 and released our Asia Pacific Youth Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development with support from ICIMOD. Through this declaration, we urge the global leaders to "*Provide adequate and long term financial support as an unconditional grant to the poor, most vulnerable and marginalized community for the climate change adaptation and mitigation at the national and local level. Any funds related to climate change to be channeled via globally agreed framework within the UN process. We are strongly against any financial assistance as a loan (climate loan) and the finance should be free of climate corruption and should follow the principles of good governance i.e. authority, responsibility, accountability and transparency.*"

I would also like to urge everyone to be equally responsible and government to ensure the resource reaches to affected and targeted communities. For example, the government of Nepal in its NAPA committed to mobilize 80 % of the fund in community level. Such kind of commitment must be applauded and should apply in all the climate change adaptation finance.

Gender and social inclusion, participation of indigenous community and youth involvement must be ensured in climate change governance in local, national and global level. Also, the establishment of efficient governance system with diverse stakeholders from local to national level, Enhancing capacity of local community with focus on youth and women, can demonstrate the good result, ownership and sustainability of the adaptation initiatives. Development and sharing of the successful adaptation practices in the region and globally can be the strong tools to cope with this global crisis.

Agreeing to the theme of this Adaptation Forum, I would like to highlight that Incorporation of climate change adaptation in all the development activities and switch to climate resilient low carbon development is the need of today's development process. Most importantly, we have to understand that mitigation is the ultimate adaptation for climate change.

I believe that this Asia Pacific Adaptation forum will keep these points in heart of the discussion and decisions and recognize youth as key and strong drivers for the implementation of climate change adaptation and climate resilient development.

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We, the youth from the region have realized that climate change adaptation is an issue of our survival, our future and our prosperity.

**Thank you for the opportunity to speak,**