

**Statement by Honourable Momodou A. Cham,**

**Secretary of State for Forestry and the Environment**

**Launching of the UNDP Global Human Development Report 2007/2008**

**Fighting Climate Change: *Human Solidarity in a Divided World***

**Corinthian Atlantic Hotel, Banjul, The Gambia: 25 March 2008**

Mr Chairman,

Her Excellency, The Vice President of the Republic: Ajaratou, Dr. Isatou Njie-Saidy,  
Speaker of the National Assembly, Aja Fatou Jahumpa Ceesay,

My Honourable Colleagues,

National Assembly Members,

The Resident Coordinator of the UN System in The Gambia,

The Resident Representative UNDP The Gambia, Mr Vitalie Muntean ,

Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Services,

Senior Government Officials,

Members of the Private Sector and Civil Society,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Department of State for Forestry and the Environment, I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the UNDP Country Office for inviting me to deliver a Statement at this important and relevant gathering.

The year 2007 has witnessed increased awareness on the challenges of climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fourth Assessment Report and the UNDP Human Development Report 2007/2008 have contributed to this increase in awareness because they sounded a clarion call clearly specifying that it is now unequivocally affirmed that our climate system has warmed, that the warming is going

to continue unless WE, as a global community, work as a family to remedy the situation.

In the area of Climate Change the world is divided into Heavy Polluters most of whom are in the rich developed world and Least or Non-Polluters the majority of whom are in the poor developing world. Thirty-nine rich polluters are responsible for 80% of the current concentration of green house gases in the atmosphere and the least or non-polluters are responsible for the remaining 20% of the concentration in the atmosphere. The least or non-polluters are receiving and will continue to face the severest impact of climate change because of their poor adaptive capacity while the heavy polluters with the highest adaptive capacity are able to face the impacts.

THIS IS THE DIVIDED WORLD OF CLIMATE CHANGE. However, as the 2007 Human Development Report clearly shows, we as a GLOBAL COMMUNITY MUST UNITE IN SOLIDARITY TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE. As clearly indicted in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, the Heavy Polluters or the Developed World should take the lead in facing the challenges posed by climate change.

Mr Chairman

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

We in The Gambia do not contribute to the BUILD-UP OR GREENHOUSE GASES IN THE ATMOSPHERE. The Gambia actually removes Greenhouse from the Atmosphere based on the management of our Forest Cover, which serves as a SINK TO GREENHOUSE GASSES. Our 1993 Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report clearly shows that AN AVERAGE GAMBIAN ABSORBES ABOUT 44 TONS OF BARBONOXIDE EVERY YEAR from the atmosphere.

Despite this non-contribution to the greenhouse gas build-up in the atmosphere by The Gambia, climate change impacts on our country will include reduced food production, increased water stress, loss of habitats and wildlife species, further salt water intrusion into the River Gambia and the continued erosion of our coastal zone and the loss of our Capital City.

Madame Vice President  
Honourable Colleagues  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Despite the fact that we as a nation did not contribute to the global warming that has resulted To the current and projected climate change, we cannot fold our hand and wait for the IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE to destroy our livelihood and de-rail our development path. As clearly mentioned in the Human Development Report that we are all about to LAUNCH, we have to face the challenge of climate change on TWO FRONTS:

- MITIGATION by which we reduce the continued build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and
- ADAPTATION by which we have to re-align and adopt policies and measures that will reduce or alleviate the negative impacts of climate change and make good use of the positive impacts of climate change.

In The Gambia, we have identified measures that include attempts in:

- Reduction of the use of fuel wood by adopting EFFICIENT COOKSTOVES and switching the extensive use of LIQUIFIED PETROLEUM GAS (LPG);
- Adopting appropriate waste management practices such as composting of waste;
- Innovative sand management, construction of groins, and the development and implementation of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan.
- Switching to drought and salinity tolerant, and high yielding crop varieties, improved irrigation systems, developing early warning system, and promoting and encouraging improved post harvest technologies.
- Enforcing sterner control on exploitation of fisheries resources, safeguard the spawning sites, halting the destruction of mangroves, and expanding fish farms in The Gambia.

Mr Chairman  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The proposed action to be taken by The Gambia in the implementation of the Climate Change Convention and its Kyoto Protocol need POLITICAL WILL, RESOURCES AND COOPERATION.

The Gambia has the POLITICAL WILL but need additional resources and cooperation to successfully participate in the implementation of the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol, with particular attention to be paid to the activities and Projects that have been identified in our First National Communication and our National Adaption Programme of Action.

We are willing to cooperate and collaborate with any country and Agency in the implementation of the Climate Change Convention and its Kyoto Protocol based on our NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES and SPECIFIC NEEDS as a LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY (LDC).

We strongly urge that the Report does not merely stay on shelves but would be the basis for concrete action on the ground to address the issues raised therewith to alleviate the poverty of the LCD's.

I thank you for your attention.