



**STATEMENT BY MR. GAURI PRADHAN, INTERNATIONAL  
COORDINATOR, LDC WATCH AT 'REGIONAL MEETING ON  
SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ASIA PACIFIC LEAST DEVELOPED  
COUNTRIES'  
22-23 MARCH 2017, KATHMANDU NEPAL**

Honourable Chair, Dr. Arbind Kumar Mishra, Member of National Planning Commission, Nepal, Excellency Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, the USG of UNOHRLLS and the Representatives of Development Partners and Distinguished Participants !

First of all, I, on behalf of LDC Watch, would like to extend my sincere appreciation to organizers, UN OHRLLS and the Government of Nepal for successfully convening the 'Regional Meeting on Sustainable Energy for Asia Pacific Least Developed Countries' in Kathmandu. I thank the organisers for giving me this opportunity to speak as a representative of LDC Civil Society in this forum. This is a very timely and a relevant initiative as we are halfway in the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA) and formulating strategies to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

We all know the fact that only 30% of the 900 million people living in the 48 LDCs have access to energy. To put this in simpler terms, 7 out of 10 of our fellow LDC citizens do not have electricity in their homes. They spend several hours every day collecting fuel for cooking and heating stoves, building fires, fetching water and grinding grains. This acute energy crisis is the binding constraint on structural transformation that the LDCs so desperately need.

It is crucial that every fellow citizen in LDCs have access to affordable and sustainable modern energy. Imagine the impact it will have in their health, in their education and eradication of poverty as a whole. It will transform the lives of the people, a transformation that they have been denied for far too long and is long overdue.

In fact, LDCs, particularly in the Asia Pacific region have ample potential of producing renewable energy. But as we all know, the main constraint for capitalizing on this potential is the financial constraints, limited capacity and lack of enabling environment. If this potential is developed sustainably in the coming decades, it would revolutionise the nation's economy and contribute for sustainable development in this region.

Deliberations and sharing of experiences of last two days at this regional meetings were very significant because

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- It has shown us the way to access and explore the potential finance to accelerate energy transformation.
- It has suggested us the capacities that we need to build to be able to access these finances and overcome the existing challenges to execute sustainable energy projects to success.
- It has further elucidated on the increasing role of national governments, private sectors and CSOs for sustainable energy investment.

Access to adequate finance for LDCs to develop sustainable energy initiatives and build renewable power capacity is very important. We call the international community for Increased Development Assistance, Partnership and Collaboration to LDCs. We also would like to urge them to enhance support to LDCs through technology transfer and Science Technology and Innovation (STI). We hope that the Technology Bank will play a vital role to help the LDCs overcome their technology and capacity constraints. We also ask for financing solutions that support modern energy initiatives from their inception phase and through their different phases of growth to be available. We also emphasize that at least 50% of ODA should be provided to LDCs, as per the international commitment. Similarly, the role that multilateral and regional banks play in bringing modern energy to the entire population of LDCs cannot be understated. Having saying so, I also appreciate the new initiatives like BIMSTEC, SAARC Energy Agreement, BBIN and the Chinese initiative 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) which I believe will also contribute for economic and sustainable energy development of LDCs in this region. This will ultimately strengthen the South-South and Triangular cooperation in the days to come.

Natural disasters, vulnerability to economic shocks and political instability are major hindrances for investors investing in sustainable energy in LDCs. They weaken the CSOs and communities striving to bring sustainable and affordable energy in LDCs. Therefore, national governments need to create an enabling environment for public and private investors through robust policies and regulations. We should not forget that building sustainable energy will not only aid economic development but also contributes towards social empowerment that allows everyone to enjoy his/her right to education, health, food, employment, water and sanitation for a dignified life.

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Before concluding my deliberation, I would like to express our full support to UN Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative for its policy advocacy, knowledge codification and sharing, partnership building and active collaboration with multi-stakeholder initiatives. We appreciate SE4ALL's for its aspiration to have civil society as its third pillar. And indeed, it is a prerequisite for the success of the initiative in terms of achieving its energy access goal, as well as mobilizing widespread support for its goals on efficiency and renewable energy. Meaningful participation by civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in SE4ALL is widely recognized as being essential to the process; they can act as trusted intermediaries between government, the private sector, and energy users on the ground, as well as having expertise in designing and delivering energy services, particularly for poor and vulnerable groups. It is also widely accepted fact that energy interventions will have an explicit development effect only if the issues and concerns of equality of access, and the benefits and costs of energy investments for poor, marginalized and vulnerable groups, are properly addressed and accounted. Therefore, I would like to call upon national governments, development partners and UN to provide adequate space for CSOs and CBOs in the process of designing, implementation and monitoring of the projects.

Finally, I take this opportunity to all LDC Governments, UN OHRLLS, and the trusted development partners for taking steps towards renewable resources and urge for removal barriers to clean energy investments and create favourable conditions for public-private partnership. Let us refocus and redirect our work to achieve the vision of the Istanbul Programme of Action and link it up with SDGs 2030, particularly Goal No. 7 and other IADGs.

Let's work together to create a world that we want.

Thank you very much.

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