

**Suo Moto Statement of Shri Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State
(Independent Charge) Environment and Forests in Rajya Sabha
on 22nd December, 2009**

Mr. Chairman Sir,

1. I rise to make a Suo Moto Statement on the 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Climate Change that was held in Copenhagen, Denmark between December 7-18th, 2009.

2. Before I get into the statement, Sir, let me say that this is the fourth time that I am speaking in some detail on the issue of climate change in recent weeks reflecting our Government's transparency and keenness to keep the Parliament fully informed at every step. It also reflects, of course, the great interest Honourable MPs themselves have in this important subject. There was a Calling Attention Motion in the Rajya Sabha on November 24th and a Zero hour discussion on December 7th. The Lok Sabha had a five-hour debate on December 3rd. Let me reiterate that I am more than prepared to discuss this issue in Parliament at any time, in any form that the House desires and the Chairman directs.

3. To return to the Copenhagen Conference, there were two segments to it. The first was between December 7th -15th that involved negotiations at the official level. The second was between December 16th -18th that involved a High- Level Segment at the Ministerial level. In addition, the Danish Presidency of the Conference of Parties had invited Ministers from all countries for informal consultations from December 12th -17th , 2009. Heads of State/Government had also been invited to the High-Level Segment of the Conference during December 17th -18th 2009. Over a hundred Heads of State/Government attended. Our Prime Minister addressed the Conference on December 18th and I had the privilege of speaking on behalf of the Government of India on December 16th. Copies of these two speeches are attached to this Statement.

4. There were **two** specific outcomes of the Copenhagen Conference. In Bali, in December 2007, the Conference of Parties had decided to have negotiations on two parallel tracks, both of which were expected to be concluded at Copenhagen. The first track relates to the outcome of the Bali Action Plan and the other track pertains to the commitment of the Annex I Parties for the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol in the period extending beyond 2012. These negotiations could not be concluded and the Copenhagen Conference decided to continue these negotiations to be completed at the end of 2010 at the 16th Conference of Parties to be held in Mexico City in December 2010. In this respect, India, South Africa, Brazil, China and other developing countries were entirely successful in ensuring that there was no violation of the mandate for the Bali Action Plan negotiations on the enhanced implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Despite relentless attempts made by the Annex I Parties, the Conference succeeded in continuing the negotiations under the Kyoto Protocol to establish the commitments of the Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol for the post-2012 period. Undoubtedly, many developed countries want to see an end to the Kyoto Protocol but we have been able to thwart these attempts for the time being. The major outcome of the Conference is, therefore, the fact that the negotiations under the UNFCCC will continue to proceed in two tracks as set out in the Bali Road Map-- one relating to the long-term cooperative action for enhancing the implementation of the Convention and the second relating to the second commitment period of Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol.

5. Another decision taken by the Conference relates to the Copenhagen Accord. India, along with over twenty five other countries that included Bangladesh, Maldives, Indonesia, China, Japan, South Korea, Papua New Guinea, Australia, Russia, Mexico, USA, Brazil, Colombia, Granada, South Africa, Algeria, Sudan, Gabon, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Spain and European Union, was invited by the host country to assist the President of the Conference in forging a consensus on several outstanding issues. The results of such informal consultations held on December 17th and 18th 2009, were brought by the COP President, on his own responsibility, to the Plenary of the Conference for consideration on

December 18th, 2009. Some countries that included Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Bolivia did not join the consensus on the draft Copenhagen Accord presented by the COP President. Since the Conference works on the principle of consensus, the Copenhagen Accord was not adopted as an outcome of the Conference. It was, however, taken note of. The contents of the Accord are not legally binding nor do they constitute a mandate for a new negotiating process under the UNFCCC.

6 The Copenhagen Accord deals with the various elements of the Bali Action Plan relating to the issues of mitigation, adaptation, financing and technology in the context of climate change. Let me present to you the highlights of the Accord.

7. The Accord recognizes the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities of the Parties in combating climate change. The Accord recognizes the need to limit the global temperature rise by 2050 to below 2 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels. While doing so, the Accord clearly sets out the goal in the context of equity and sustainable development. This ensures that in achieving this goal, the right of the developing countries to have an equitable share in access to global atmospheric resources cannot be ignored and is ensured. I might add here that this was a point repeatedly made by the Prime Minister in all his interactions.

8. The Copenhagen Accord does speak of “cooperation in achieving the peaking of global and national emissions as soon as possible”. However, the Accord explicitly recognises that the time frame for peaking will be longer in developing countries. It also bears in mind that “social and economic development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries”. The Accord therefore, does not speak of a specific year for peaking for developing countries which has always been on the agenda of the developed countries. This is another area of success for us at Copenhagen. This is also consistent with the position of India was outlined by our Prime Minister over two years ago that our per capita emissions will never exceed the average per capita emissions of the developed countries.

9. There has been insistence from the developed countries to adopt quantified emission reduction targets in the long-term by the global community. A global goal of 50% emissions reduction by 2050 with reference to current levels of emissions has been generally emphasized by the Annex I countries. Reference to such a specific numerical target in terms of emission reduction has been avoided in the Accord because of the insistence of the developing countries, particularly India that a global goal should be expressed only in terms of limit in increase of temperature and not in terms of a quantified emission reduction target. This is because such a target would result in a binding commitment for the developing countries who do not have such obligations under the UNFCCC. We can be satisfied that we were able to get our way on this issue as well.

10. The Accord obliges the Annex I countries to indicate their mid-term emissions reduction target for 2020 by January 31, 2010 to the Secretariat. Their actions in respect of emission reduction and financing support given to developing countries for mitigation actions in developing countries will be subject to measurement, reporting and verification as per the guidelines adopted by the Conference of Parties.

11. The mitigation actions of the developing countries are to be supported by the developed countries in Accordance with Article 4.7 of the UNFCCC. Mitigation actions of developing countries will be subject to domestic measurement, reporting and verification as per its internal procedures. Report of such mitigation actions, supported or unsupported will be made to the Secretariat through the National Communications which will be made every two years. There is a provision for international consultations and analysis for implementation of the actions reported through National Communications. The guidelines for such consultation and analysis will be devised and defined in due course. We have been able to incorporate a specific provision that these “clearly defined guidelines will ensure that the national sovereignty is respected”. This is another accomplishment for us at Copenhagen. Of course, as I have stated on earlier occasions, the supported mitigation actions will be open to international

measurement, report and verification as per guidelines adopted by the Conference of Parties.

12. Under the Accord, the developed country Parties have agreed to set up a Climate Fund named “Copenhagen Green Climate Fund” to provide resources approaching US\$ 30 billion during the period 2010-2012 to support the adaptation and mitigation actions of the developing country Parties. The funding for adaptation will be focused on the least developed countries, small island developing States and Africa. They have also undertaken a commitment to mobilize US \$ 100 billion a year by 2020 for such purposes and a high level panel will be set up under the guidance of Conference of Parties to review the progress of these commitments.

13. A Technology Mechanism is also proposed to be established to accelerate technology development and transfer in support of adaptation and mitigation actions in the developing countries. Negotiations on the precise architecture of this Mechanism are underway in the UNFCCC and I am pleased to mention that many of the proposals made by India in this regard have found acceptance. A network of technology innovation centres has been proposed by India as a part of this mechanism.

14. The objectives and the implementation of the Accord will be assessed and the process of assessment will be completed by 2015 in order to consider the possibility of further strengthening the long term goal of limiting the temperature rise to below 1.5 degree Celsius. This was in response to a demand made by 43 small island developing states that includes Maldives. Bangladesh and Nepal have also supported this idea.

15. Sir, a notable feature of this Conference that has been widely commented on is the manner in which the BASIC group of countries coordinated their positions. Ministers of the BASIC group comprising Brazil, South Africa, India and China has met in Beijing on November 27th and 28th, 2009 to prepare for Copenhagen in a joint manner. Honourable Members may recall that I had briefed them in my earlier interventions on the results of that meeting. The BASIC Group Ministers met virtually on an hourly basis right through the Copenhagen Conference. Within BASIC,

India and China worked very, very closely together. I believe that the BASIC group has emerged as a powerful force in climate change negotiations and India should have every reason to be satisfied it has played in catalyzing the emergence of this new quartet. Their unity was instrumental in ensuring that the Accord was finalized in Accordance with the negotiating framework as laid out in the UNFCCC, Bali Action Plan and the Kyoto Protocol. We will continue to work together with these countries as well as other countries of the G-77 to ensure that the interests of the developing countries and India in particular are protected in course of negotiations in 2010 and beyond. I should also mention here that President Obama interacted with the two Prime Ministers and two Presidents of the BASIC Group and it was at this meeting that the Copenhagen Accord was clinched to the satisfaction of all present. It was at this crucial meeting that the BASIC group was able to get agreement on its proposals on global goals and on monitoring and verification. It was also able to ensure that the Copenhagen Accord was not legally binding and that there was no mention of a new legally binding instrument in the Accord.

12. Sir, I have been somewhat detailed in this *suo moto* statement. I have never hidden anything from this Parliament and have been very upfront about how our thinking on climate change has to evolve and not remain frozen in time. I have repeatedly sought flexibility within a framework of certain non-negotiables. Earlier, I spoke to both Houses on the basis of my intentions and had said that ultimately actions will speak louder than words. I had assured both Houses that we will negotiate in a manner that the national interest is not only protected but also enhanced. Copenhagen is not a destination but the beginning of a long process. There are indeed many risks, many hazards, many threats. We have to be extraordinarily vigilant and watchful, negotiating tough but always from a position of strength. For the moment I believe that India has come out quite well at Copenhagen and we have been recognized for our constructive approach. We will continue to play such a role. We have to deepen our capacity to pursue proactive climate diplomacy internationally. We have to get down to implementing a comprehensive domestic agenda of both adaptation and mitigation and of moving on the road to cutting our emissions intensity of

GDP by 20-25% by 2020 on 2005 levels which is not only eminently feasible but which can also be improved upon to the benefit of our own people. We must soon unveil a detailed roadmap for a low-carbon growth strategy. We must also strengthen our own scientific capacity to measure, monitor and model the impacts of climate change on different sectors of our economy and in different regions of our country.

13.Mr. Chairman, Sir I will now be more than glad and willing to clarify any doubts and answer any questions that Honourable Members may wish to raise. I see this statement as part of a continuing dialogue between our government and Honourable MPs, as a reflection of our determination to ensure accountability to Parliament.