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COP 18 on the UNFCCC and Nepal

The 18th Conference of the Parties (COP) on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held at Doha, Qatar during 26 November –7 December 2012 to address the current climate change issues at all levels. The conference concluded with a number of decisions including the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and additional guidance to the least developed countries' fund. The representatives from 195 parties had taken part in the Convention. On behalf of the Government of Nepal, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment had led the delegation. The conference is an important forum especially for the least developed countries like Nepal. The countries shared their experiences regarding the impacts as well as adaptation and mitigation of the climate change phenomena with the global communities.

The conference produced a package of documents collectively titled as 'the Doha Climate Gateway' containing the decisions of the conference. The important decision was made on the amendment of the Kyoto Protocol (to be ratified before entering into the force) to be continued until the second commitment period running from 2013 to 2020. The governments have agreed to establish the legal instrument for smooth implementation of the protocol. The conference realized the approaches that address loss and damage associated with climate change impacts in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change to enhance adaptive capacity. It is noted that a range of approaches, methods and tools is available to assess the risk, and to respond to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change.

During the conference, the governments have agreed to make a universal climate change agreement covering all countries until 2020, to be adopted by 2015. For the purpose, the member countries will closely work together during 2013 to prepare the new agreement and to explore further ways in reducing the emission level. As per the agreement, the governments will submit their information, views and proposals on actions and initiatives regarding the emission cut to the UN Climate Change Secretariat, by 1 March 2013. The conference decided to develop the mechanism particularly needed for the smooth implementation of technology transfer and financial support to the developing countries. The GCF is expected to start from second half of 2013 so that activities can be launched in 2014. Realizing the importance of the climate technology matters, the member

parties further decided to establish a Climate Technology Centre (CTC) as the implementing wing of the UNFCCC's Technology Mechanism and to endorse the constitution of the CTC Advisory Board.

Climate financing was the core part of the discussion in the conference though no such exciting agreements have been made so far as expected by the least developed and developing countries. Developed countries only repeated their commitment to continue long term climate finance support to developing countries as promised during the COP 17. It is expected that the member countries will work on long-term financing mechanism during 2013 to support on-going efforts as well as to scale up existing mobilization of climate finance resources.

The conference was important from the forestry perspective as well since the forum was used to clarify the ways and means to measure deforestation. More importantly, the global community has assured that the efforts against deforestation and forest degradation will be supported and compensated. Nepal was successful to deliver its ideas on the climate change issues of the nation including the REDD+ during the conference though outcomes from the discussion were not relatively satisfactory as expected for the least developed countries like Nepal. Nepal is a pilot country for the implementation of Reducing Emission through Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) program, the presence of forestry professionals and the relevant government institutions in the conference is very important. In Nepal, the Department of Forest Research and Survey under the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation is responsible for carrying out forest resource inventory at regional and national levels. It is equally responsible for MRV (monitoring, reporting, and verification of the forest resources) component of REDD+ initiative in Nepal.