

Strengthening State Strategies for Climate Actions (3SCA)
National Inception Meeting
Date: 27th September 2016

Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC),

Mr. Jaco Cilliers, Country Director UNDP,

Senior representatives of the partner state governments of Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Sikkim,

Distinguished guests, dear colleagues;

Yesterday evening, I had the honour to present my credentials to the President of the Republic of India. So I arrived in India quite recently. But even before landing here, I was aware that climate change is a major issue that is of high priority for the Government of India. The role that India can play in combating climate change is enormous. In 2015, on Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, India announced its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) under the UNFCCC. This year, India will be ratifying the Paris Agreement on the same day. The positive response that has been triggered across the world following India's decision is a testimony to the importance of India as a key player in the efforts to address Climate Change. I am pleased that Switzerland is a partner to India in addressing this global challenge, thus building on the longstanding collaboration between the two countries. I also would like to congratulate the Government of India for the different initiatives it has launched. I understand that the State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC) constitute an important pillar of India's climate change policy contributing to the achievement of its Nationally Determined

Contribution (NDC). Today, most states of India have developed their own Action Plans on Climate Change. Since more than a year, we have been deliberating with the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) on the options and possibilities of supporting some states in implementing these plans.

I am happy that we are launching the “Strengthening State Strategies for Climate Actions” at the national level today. Under this project, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation will be supporting the states of Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Madhya Pradesh in the implementation of their State Action Plans on Climate Change with a focus on selected sectors. The similarities of the Swiss and Himalayan ecosystems and SDC’s long years of engagement in the semi-arid areas of India were a factor guiding the selection. Leveraging the Swiss knowledge in the focus sectors and providing appropriate technical expertise to the state governments will be an important contribution of this project. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my best compliments to the representatives of the three state governments who are present here today. Switzerland is pleased to embark on this new collaboration with your state governments.

UNDP is our implementing partner for this collaboration. With its prior experience of supporting the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the states in developing the State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs) and with its links to global policy trends on climate change, it is well positioned to anchor the engagement at multiple levels. We look forward to further strengthening our relationship through this collaboration.

I would like to inform you that Switzerland recently completed a nationwide mapping of climatic risks and that our government has adopted a National Adaptation Strategy. Presently, just as in India, we too are embarking on the more challenging component of translating strategies into concrete actions at the sub national level. Hence, the joint learning experiences of this collaboration will mutually benefit both our countries.

Financing adaptation efforts has turned out to be one of the biggest hurdles in addressing climate change. But India's setting up of the National Adaptation Fund has demonstrated its strong willingness to take action on the climate change front. On the topic of climate finance, Switzerland has played an important role in the setting up of the Green Climate Fund and was one of the first countries to pledge 100 million Swiss francs – which is approximately the same amount in US\$ - to the fund in 2014. The project will also strive to support partner state governments in the preparation of robust proposals that could be funded by the resources available through funding mechanisms.

Finally, on behalf of the Government of Switzerland, I would like to once again take this opportunity to express our best compliments to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the state governments of Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Sikkim. I wish all the participants the very best for a fruitful and stimulating session and look forward to a successful implementation of the project.