



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Address at the Climate Focus Session 3

Delivered by honourable Rejoice Mabudafhasi,MP, Deputy Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Republic of South Africa

Stockholm, Sweden

“Raising the profile of Water in the global climate discourse”

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Programme director

Excellencies

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Introduction

Climate change reminds us that we are ecological interdependent, thus it has a negative impact on the environment and on people if it is not well managed, which results in inequality and poverty.

Climate change has no boundaries, it is everybody's business in this planet. We need a united voice and collective commitment to tackle this global phenomenon from all role players.

We have enough scientific and indigenous evidence that climate change is a major threat to sustainable growth and development in the world, which will threaten the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Africa is regarded as the most vulnerable continent, due to its high climatic variability and change. However, it is noted that Africa has low adaptive capacity and also low resilience, even though it contributes less than 4% of the greenhouse gas emissions globally.

Climate change experts have already confirmed that the impact will reduce agricultural production, worsening food and water security, spread diseases, increase risk of conflict over scarce land and water resources as well as increase frequency and severity of natural disasters such as floods and droughts.

Water is arguably the primary medium through which climate change impacts will be felt by people, ecosystems and economies. We need a robust climate change adaptation response in South Africa. South Africa is a water scarce country and has a low rainfall and one of the lowest run-offs in the world.

Based on our current demand projections South Africa will in all probability exceed the limits of our economically usable land based on water resources by 2050. The predicted adverse effects of climate change will worsen the problems of water shortages and will only bring forward the date when we exceed our available supply.

South Africa share water resources with six neighbouring countries: Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

Water and Climate Change: COP 17 in Durban, South Africa.

Given the above mentioned factors and challenges we have no choice but to ensure that we increase our adaptive capacity level and reduce vulnerability impacts.

South Africa's original position was that water becomes a separate programme, however, due to concerns raised by some of the parties (countries) during the Bonn negotiations meeting, this position was rejected and the suggestion was that water issues should be integrated under adaptation activities.

Even though our original position was rejected, South Africa still believes that water as a catalyst to our development and the fact that it is also a cross cutting issue therefore there is a need for full integration into the climate change adaptation activities.

In conclusion, I am appealing to the global water sector that we ensure that water is one of the key priorities during the COP 17 negotiations in Durban.

South Africa and Africa is ready to host this important and historical event. As the water sector let us ensure that Adaptation issues will be at the centre of the Durban deal by

ensuring a process for concrete implementation of adaptation activities, and recognizing that adaptation needs financial support, capacity building and technology from developed countries.

Durban is expected to finalize an ambitious Adaptation Framework, develop guidelines and support for our National Adaptation Plans and build momentum towards a mechanism to compensate for climate-related losses and damage.

We will not rest until this water issue is taken seriously within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

I thank you