



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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AFFAIRS, MS REJOICE MABUDAFHASI
DURING THE LOCAL CLIMATE SOLUTIONS
FOR AFRICA 2011 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ICC CAPE TOWN**

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Good evening ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to Cape Town, South Africa and to Africa ! Thanks to ICLEI for the opportunity to be with you on this important conference held in this beautiful city. The recent success of hosting the international FIFA World Cup 2010 event gives us confidence to host a successful COP 17.

We look forward to welcoming as many as 40 000 COP17 visitors, which will include Heads of State. **INTRODUCTION**

Climate change is considered to be one of the most serious threats to sustainable development, with adverse environment, social and economic Impacts. Cities bear the impacts of climate change but also play a vital role in finding sustainable solutions to the climate change challenge. Coastal cities are particularly exposed to rising sea levels and storm surges due to Climate Change..

Cities will not only face risks from floods and rising sea levels, but also significant increases in temperatures and the frequency of heat waves. Higher air temperatures and more frequent

droughts can cause increasing demand for household and industrial use of water in urban areas. That is why we need to step up our water conservation awareness.

In this context South Africa has demonstrated its leadership in contributing to the international mitigation effort to reduce greenhouse gases by committing in Copenhagen to undertake mitigation actions which will result in a deviation below the current emissions baseline of 34% by 2020 and by 42% by 2025, on provision that the necessary finance, technology and capacity building support is received.

DISCUSSION - ROLE OF ICLEI

I would like to recognise the important global role of ICLEI in connecting local leaders, mayors and politicians, officials and experts towards finding local climate solutions for Africa. I commend you. Cities and local governments and their communities serve a pivotal role in driving climate action and implementing decisions from UN conventions like the UNFCCC COP decisions and national decisions, strategies and policies towards responding to the impacts of climate change. Local Governments, as the closest form of government to people and local communities, are powerful drivers and incubators for change and for concrete implementation. Local governments networks at global level, like ICLEI and UCLG, in close cooperation with the national networks like SALGA, play a pivotal role in connecting local leaders and in global advocacy in addressing climate change at the local level.

Hosting half of the world's population today and predicted to host two thirds of the world's population by 2030, cities have a responsibility to act on the influence of human activities, in order to mitigate the impacts of climate change by implementing actions that will lead to a reduction of greenhouse gases.

There is an increasing recognition that the sustainability of urban social-ecological systems is a function of their functional integrity and resilience.

The application of the concept of resilience to urban social-ecological systems is as yet undeveloped. In this regard, climate change is likely to affect resources relevant to the poor in urban settings such as water infrastructure through storm damage and heat stress, services such as sewage and refuse, health, through all types of pollution and diseases such as malaria and cholera and disasters such as fires and flood recovery

Towards COP 15: Copenhagen: Local Government Climate Roadmap

I have observed first-hand the involvement of Local governments and their organisations in Climate Conferences of the Parties (COPs) since they began in 1995. Participating in the COPs gives local governments the opportunity to communicate their achievements, share experiences and to demonstrate the great potential of local governments to support the implementation of the climate agreements.

The Roadmap was set up to accompany and follow up international climate negotiations in order to achieve a far-reaching climate agreement which includes the legal and institutional empowerment of local and regional governments in the forthcoming global climate deal. As such, local government representatives have been present at each of the pre-negotiations in 2009 and have continuously reported on the proceedings. The Local Government Climate Roadmap is thus a process that is designed as an advocacy journey addressing national governments, campaigning for a strong and comprehensive post-2012 global climate agreement. I would like to commend the network of local governments for the establishment of this important Local Government Climate Roadmap.

Towards COP16 : Cancun – the World Mayors Summit on Climate, Mexico City, 21 Nov 2010

In preparation for COP16, local governments demonstrated their high level of commitment to climate action when they gathered at the World Mayors Summit on Climate 2010, in Mexico City, on 21 November 2010. More than 140 cities representing more than 170 million of people worldwide voluntarily committed to the Global Cities Climate Covenant (the Mexico City Pact) and the Carbon Cities Climate Registry (CCCR) – this Registry will support the global credibility of local climate action by allowing transparency, accountability and comparability of climate actions, performance and commitments.

Towards COP 17: Durban South Africa

Hosting COP 17 in South Africa is indeed a very significant moment for us. Perhaps even more significant is the fact that this COP is an African COP ! We are just a venue, it belongs to

Africa. So we will be negotiating for outcomes that benefit Africa's poor and marginalized communities especially the rural. I believe that as much as climate change is a sustainable development challenge, it is also a poverty issue, which is close to my heart. It is a challenge for achieving the MDG's.

Poor populations in Africa are the most vulnerable to climate change, because we lack the resources to quickly and effectively protect ourselves from extreme weather patterns. We use cheaper materials to build dwellings. Urban heat island effects will exacerbate the effects of global warming in all cities. The poorest populations will be more affected as they have fewer resources to respond to and combat the impacts of Climate Change.

The consensus achieved around different decisions adopted in Cancun is a very important step in continuing negotiations around the various, still "open" questions. Regarding the LCA work, this will continue towards COP17 in Durban. It is our intention as host and president of COP 17 to continue to build on the Cancun Agreements. During 2011, the main discussion around the legal format and institutionalization of the outcomes of the AWG-LCA will remain the central point of the negotiations.

The parallel negotiations around the Kyoto Protocol in Cancun gave hope that the Kyoto Protocol as such can still function as a part of the international response to climate change. We know that there is a significant move by major industrialised countries to do away with Kyoto at COP 17.

IN CONCLUSION

Well, I am sure you all would like to know what our approach is towards COP 17.

I believe that the ultimate goal of the negotiations would be to reach global consensus on a new global framework that is fair and equitable with all nations taking into account our common but differentiated responsibility as well as their national circumstances towards an overall reduction of Greenhouse Gas from the atmosphere and of course to build on the work that was achieved in Mexico through the Cancun Agreements especially with respect to operationalising the Climate Green fund and a new focus on reducing emissions from degradation deforestation (REDD)

Africa will be hardest hit by the impacts of climate change so we need to ramp up funding for disaster relief and adaptation. Technology transfer will be important to meet our mitigation undertaking. Funding for countries which are already taking actions in terms of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions is also important. Many countries in Africa and around the world are already experiencing these harmful impacts and are already spending billions on adaptation and disaster relief.

A new Durban agreement must be able to achieve consensus and a balanced outcome for both developed and developing countries. There could however be some new innovative and creative options as well, so it is important that we work well together over the coming months to build this consensus and trust with all nations. Climate change affects us all. It is our common enemy. We have to reach a joint, holistic approach in order to win the war against climate change. Cities and local governments have a major role to play in this regard. I commend you for your hard work thus far and encourage you to keep up the fight !

I wish you well in your deliberations over the next few days towards finding local climate change response solutions.

I thank you