

NATIONAL STATEMENT DELIVERED AT THE UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE IN POZNAN BY MARTHINUS VAN SCHALKWYK, MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM, SOUTH AFRICA, 11 DECEMBER 2008

South Africa associates itself with the statements by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the G77&China, and Algeria on behalf of the African Group.

In Bali, we opened the door for negotiating a strengthened climate regime that mobilises political will on the basis of a shared vision and equitable burden-sharing; that balances climate and development, and adaptation and mitigation; and that provides adequate means of implementation.

In Poznan, we must now walk through that door and move into full negotiating mode, thereby ensuring that we conclude negotiations in Copenhagen in twelve months time. We cannot now dither in the face of a short term economic downturn. To arrive at an internationally agreed, legally-binding and enforceable outcome in Copenhagen, to be ratified by 2012, we need negotiating texts on the table early in 2009.

Increasingly, developing countries are making substantive proposals to move us forward. In South Africa, we have committed to our emissions peaking between 2020 and 2025, then stabilising for a decade, before declining in absolute terms towards mid-century. We will put our best efforts into making our fair contribution - but to do more, we need support from the international community.

We are looking to developed countries to take the lead. We are therefore disappointed that the G77&China's proposals on technology and finance have been met by a deafening silence. Unfortunately, some of our developed country partners still play hide and seek with commitments on ambitious mid-term targets. We call on them to come forward with clear numbers.

With reference to the overall structure of the Copenhagen package, it will be a missed opportunity if we do not also start a political dialogue in Poznan on the content and legal form of the agreed outcome.

In 1992, the Convention was negotiated as a framework, an umbrella that establishes the key principles and areas of work. In 1995, we took decisive action and agreed to develop a new legal instrument, the Kyoto Protocol - as a first, but not sufficient step under this framework.

Adopting another instrument which will co-exist with the Kyoto Protocol under this Convention Framework, parts of which need to be legally-binding, may well be what is required next to achieve a balance of interests.

Firstly, we must give legally binding force to mitigation commitments by the developed country that has not yet ratified the Kyoto Protocol. These commitments must be comparable to the mid-term targets negotiated under the Kyoto Protocol for the second commitment period, and it must be supported by a robust compliance system. These absolute reduction targets for Annex I Parties, in aggregate, should be towards the upper end of the range of 25% to 40% below 1990 levels by 2020, and should underpin a long term goal of domestic emission reductions in developed countries of 80% to 95% below 1990 levels by 2050.

Secondly, we must create a binding regime for delivery by developed countries of technology, financing and capacity-building support for developing country action, which is measurable, reportable and verifiable. Predictable funding and technology flows to developing countries hold the potential to trigger commensurate nationally-appropriate mitigation actions. This will ensure that we are enabled to bend the curve of our emissions to deviate substantially from our business-as-usual emission trajectories.

Finally, we must create a mechanism for international recognition of developing country action and to match actions with commensurate incentives.

Mr President, we must ensure that global emissions peak in the next 10 to 15 years. It is now time to raise the bar for all. South Africa stands ready to do its part. We are also playing a leading role to advance gender mainstreaming as a critical dimension of poverty eradication, sustainable development and adaptation to climate change.

I thank you.

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