



**14th session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
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**Statement by
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United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**

Your Excellency,
Honourable Ministers,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear children, Asante sana for your song and rhythm. Asante sana to AMCEN and the Government of Tanzania for this wonderful invitation to join you here.

This being the first time I am on African soil since the Durban Climate Change conference, I would like to once again thank all of you for the results of Durban, and thank you for African leadership, vision, perseverance and commitment to attaining a landmark agreement, even if that took 36 hours of tireless work beyond the deadline!

And before I finish my thank you for Durban, I would like to again appreciate the very hard work of my good friend and sister, Minister Edna Molewa who worked very hard, not only during the Conference, but the whole year leading up to Durban. I would like to ask for an applause for Edna.

Now my friends, given the global challenges that we face, I think we must admit that Durban was not perfect ... but it was historic, because it did put in place the necessary elements of a global response to climate change, and Those elements, taken forward successfully, can transform Africa's future. So I don't think that it is a coincidence that a vision forged in Durban, was agreed on African soil, on the African continent.

As the distinguished Vice President of Tanzania has just said, Africa is the continent that is most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. As we consider the evolution of the climate regime, I would not be surprised if many in Africa feel caught between devastating damage to the continent caused by continued rise in global emissions on the one hand, and on the other side, being deprived of necessary and urgent industrial development and growth if emissions are curbed.

From my point of view, that concern is very understandable, given the strong historical link between economic development and greenhouse gas emissions.

However, as we know, past development patterns do not have to determine future growth patterns. In fact, I am here to share with you the fact that the result of a successful implementation of the Climate Change Convention is precisely the successful delinking of economic growth from GHG emissions. A successful implementation of the Climate Change Convention would spur resilience and economic growth in those countries that need it the most, while at the same time, it would reduce global GHG emissions, in particular, in those countries that emit the most.

So, what does that mean?

Adaptation

Let me start with Adaptation because it is the most urgent and the most relevant for Africa.

To be honest, the Climate Change Convention has not done enough on adaptation, but there have been some concrete steps.

Thanks to the good work of many of you over the past few years, in Doha, finally, support will be launched for the design and implementation of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), to enable a comprehensive and long-term adaptation response to the adverse impacts of climate change alongside sustainable development efforts; now, my word of warning on that, is that African nations should be ready to design and implement NAPs based on your technical and financial needs and your national circumstances. So, be ready for a good opportunity.

Secondly, under the work programme on loss and damage, the outcomes of the work programme will help to incentivize effective risk management and appropriate responses, to residual impacts after mitigation and adaptation have been implemented, at the national, regional and international levels

Here again, I call upon all of you, because Africa must identify and address its very unique needs in loss and damage and develop measures, with the support of industrialized countries, to address those unique circumstances.

Thirdly, I had the pleasure and the privilege of opening the first meeting of the Adaptation Committee just a few days ago in Bangkok, so I celebrate with you, that finally the Adaptation Committee has started its work, and I would like to officially announce the very wonderful news that the first Chair of the AC is your good friend from Zimbabwe, Mrs. Margaret Mukahanana-Sangarwe, of whom we are very proud.

So dear friends, through her and your other African representatives on the Committee, the Committee must ensure action on adaptation is coherent, effective and that it addresses the needs of Africa.

I call upon you to actively move forward the adaptation agenda in Doha, including on further clarity of financing for adaptation and a work programme for agriculture that you have long worked on.

Let me now move to mitigation.

Mitigation

Achim Steiner, sitting here with us, reminds me that the two analyses on the gaps that UNEP has published, really attest to the fact that the current pledges that we have on the table, are fatally insufficient to achieve a temperature increase of below 2 degrees let alone 1.5 degrees, which is what many nations aspire to.

Industrialized countries

So, first industrialized country responsibility. There is no doubt that industrialized countries need to continue taking the lead in reducing of their own emissions.

The Kyoto Protocol, as we know, is the only existing, legally-binding instrument that is rules-based. In the Second Commitment Period, industrialized countries must assume legally binding emission reductions that are responsible today, and grow over time

Furthermore, those industrialized countries that are not in the Kyoto Protocol need to raise their mitigation ambition now and not only after 2020.

Now, let me turn to developing countries.

Developing countries

49 developing countries have announced their National Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), including some African countries.

They have announced these NAMAs, not because any of these countries are voluntarily foregoing development, but rather because they realize this is the opportunity to pursue economic growth while avoiding unnecessary GHG emissions.

It is only logical, and forgive me if I say something that is self-evident, it is only logical that you can only significantly reduce emissions if you have substantial emissions to begin with.

China, India, Brazil, South Africa – all have domestic emission reduction plans, even legislation, frankly not because they primarily want to contribute to global climate stability, which is also one of the purposes, but because they understand that it is in their self-interest to pursue their imminent growth through carbon-efficient fuels and technologies.

Moving away from the emerging developing countries, here in Africa, most African nations have low emission levels, and hence cannot significantly contribute to global emission reductions. But at the same time, and this is the main message I would like to convey to you, Africa cannot afford to stay out of the global transformation toward low carbon economic growth. Allow me to explain.

Fossil fuels have powered development over the last 200 years. Fossil fuels will continue to play a role. However, the unnecessary expanded use of, in most cases, imported fossil fuels, is currently an economic burden on many developing countries, and mostly importantly, a future liability.

It is a painful reality for all of us that Africa was left behind in the last wave of global development. And now, we are at the cusp of the next wave of development, which is LOW-CARBON. My dear friends, Africa cannot be left behind again.

The African continent cannot go from being the continent with the highest rates of unelectrified population, to powering its future growth with fuels and technologies that will soon become obsolete.

Africa has the opportunity to leapfrog energy infrastructure. Just like the continent has moved from the need for expensive ineffective landline telephony to widespread use of cost-effective cell phones, the continent can move from heavy reliance on imported fossil fuels to the use of domestically available renewable energy sources to provide the energy, build the infrastructure, develop and supply services to the very deserving African people.

Africa is a continent of contrasts. In the past decade it has reached a major economic turning point with over one quarter of African countries growing 6 pct or more in 2011 (World Bank).

- But African nations remain vulnerable, even without climate change impacts, to energy and food price shocks
- African nations remain under electrified with 600 million deprived of electricity
- Many African nations remain in poverty - undermining adaptive capacity of whole countries to climate change impacts
- As we well know, of 48 LDCs, 33 are in Africa, including 12 landlocked, 3 small islands.

I hope I do not surprise you when I say that a bigger, better climate change regime could provide Africa with some solutions.

As I have mentioned, it is a leapfrog scenario, and renewable energy is the springboard.

Africa and Renewables

The reality that we face today is that, contrary to all other continents that are growing in renewable energy, the share of renewables in total energy output in most African countries has remained flat for almost two decades (IEA)

And yet, Africa has significant renewable energy potential.

In Solar: The large areas in the non-Mediterranean Saharan, Central and East Africa – there, the photovoltaic potential could produce twice the European output. (EU Commission 2011 report). There have to be of course national policies to make

it competitive with the alternatives, and with respect to diesel generators and grid extension. But in many areas it is already cheaper and competitive, and can support decentralized cheap local mini-grids in remote areas.

In micro-Hydro: 30% African population live in areas where micro-hydro offers cheapest source of electricity, plus farming and food benefits. (EU Commission 2011 report).

And finally, the large hydro and geothermal potential of the continent is well-known.

So with this vast potential, is Africa is moving in the direction of taking advantage of its domestically available renewable energy sources? Yes. Countries such as Angola, Cameroon, DRC, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, are already showing the way, but much more can be done with powerful domestic policies that attract serious foreign investment.

On to Doha

Honorable Ministers, at the international level, the next step in incentivizing low-carbon development in Africa is the upcoming Climate Change Conference in Doha.

In Doha, governments must meet several challenges:

- To transition seamlessly to a science and rule-based second Commitment Period of the Kyoto Protocol
- To agree a vision for a universal agreement that benefits all
- To fill in ambition shortfalls, both mitigation and finance, before and after 2020
- To make implementation of support infrastructure for developing countries concrete and progressively more intensive
- To address the continuity and adequate scale of finance

I am sure that we all recognize that in Doha, as in Durban, as in Cancun, no country, no region, will get everything that it wants.

But all countries, all regions, must get what they need to be safe, sustainable and with open access to the many benefits that are emerging from the climate regime.

In the climate negotiations, Africa has turned diversity into strength. You have, thanks to AMCEN, and has been mentioned by the distinguished Minister of Mali and my colleague Achim Steiner, you have emerged as an increasingly organized and influential force in the climate change talks. You have worked with other groups and Parties to promote convergence to seek common solutions, and you have contributed much to shaping the direction and foundations of the international response to climate change.

Within your ranks, you have already begun, both strategic planning and action, on both adaptation and mitigation.

I applaud your efforts and I encourage you to show the world what is needed and possible in terms of both action and support.

My message to you is: the success of the emerging climate change regime is the answer for Africa. Africa has the power to help ensure that success.

Thank you
