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ZIMBABWE

SPEECH BY MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

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AT THE 16TH CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP 16)

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THE COP PRESIDENT,
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

WE MEET HERE IN CANCUN AT A TIME WHEN CLIMATE CHANGE – LONG ON THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA – SHOULD BE RECEIVING THE VERY HIGHEST ATTENTION THAT IT MERITS. WE HAVE ALL HEARD A LOT ABOUT THE FINDINGS OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE. THEY HAVE UNEQUIVOCALLY AFFIRMED THE WARMING OF OUR CLIMATE SYSTEM, AND LINKED IT DIRECTLY TO HUMAN ACTIVITY. WE THEREFORE WELCOME THE ATTENTION THAT THIS GLOBAL THREAT IS RECEIVING FROM THE UNITED NATIONS.

AS YOU ARE ALL AWARE, CLIMATE CHANGE IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST THREATS FACING MANKIND TODAY AND THAT AFRICA WILL SUFFER THE MOST FROM THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. THE SERIOUS UNDER-DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONTINENT SIGNIFIES HIGH VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS. SCIENCE HAS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE IS EXTREME URGENCY IN TAKING REAL ACTION TO AVOID IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGES TO OUR PLANET.

NATURAL DISASTERS IN ZIMBABWE ARE GRADUALLY INCREASING IN NUMBER AND FREQUENCY. THE HIGH FREQUENCY OF THE OCCURRENCE OF DROUGHTS AND FLOODS IN ZIMBABWE AND SOUTHERN AFRICA AT LARGE HAS BEEN LINKED TO GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE. WE ARE ALREADY EXPERIENCING A DECLINE IN RAINFALL AND WARMING OF TEMPERATURES. SEVERAL CLIMATE MODELS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT WATER RESOURCES IN THE COUNTRY ARE EXPECTED TO DWINDLE AND CROP YIELDS IN ZIMBABWE LIKELY TO DECREASE CONSIDERABLY. THIS IS ALREADY HAPPENING.

MADAM PRESIDENT,

WE HAVE ALREADY EXPERIENCED AN INCREASE OF UP TO 2 DEGREES CELSIUS IN SOME AREAS OF ZIMBABWE IN THE PAST CENTURY. THIS YEAR IN OCTOBER, 50 YEAR MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE RECORDS HAVE BEEN BROKEN. THE INCREASING GLOBAL TEMPERATURES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH UNDESIRABLE CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS SUCH AS THE RESURGENCE OF MALARIA IN AREAS THAT DID NOT EXPERIENCE MALARIA BEFORE, LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY AND SHIFTING OF EXISTING AGRICULTURAL ZONES THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY OBSERVING.

THE ENCROACHMENT OF DESERTIFICATION IN THE SOUTH WESTERN PARTS OF ZIMBABWE HAS ALSO BEEN LINKED TO CLIMATIC VARIATIONS.

FROM THE FOREGOING, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON ZIMBABWE WILL NEGATIVELY IMPACT ON OUR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE VIEWS *GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE* AS A SERIOUS ISSUE. THE CHALLENGE FOR THE COUNTRY IS HOW TO DEVELOP AND FINANCE ADAPTATION STRATEGIES THAT CAN MITIGATE THE DIVERSE AND COMPLEX IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

THE GLOBAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE ISSUE OF THE ADAPTATION FUND TO ASSIST ALL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE ARE GOING ON VERY SLOWLY. HOWEVER, CONSIDERING THE URGENCY OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE IMPACTS CURRENTLY BEING EXPERIENCED, OUR COUNTRIES' VERY LOW ADAPTIVE CAPACITY, AND THE RECENT FINDINGS OF THE FOURTH ASSESSMENT REPORT, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE MOVE AT A FASTER SPEED TO CONCLUDE THESE NEGOTIATIONS.

ZIMBABWE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A 'SPECIAL ADAPTATION FUND FOR AFRICA'. THIS IS BECAUSE, ALL ALONG, AFRICA HAS BEEN THE LEAST FUNDED OUT OF GLOBAL ARRANGEMENTS SUCH AS THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF), WORLD BANK, INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION (IFC), AND OTHERS.

WE NEED TO SEE REAL ACTION ON ADAPTATION, MOVING FROM PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT TO IMPLEMENTATION AND PRACTICAL ACTION.

ZIMBABWE, AND INDEED THE WHOLE OF AFRICA, NEED THE FUNDING FOR TECHNOLOGIES THAT ASSIST IN ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE, SUCH AS TECHNOLOGIES FOR EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS. THERE IS A MULTIPLICITY OF ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY TECHNOLOGIES THAT WE CAN ENGAGE THAT MITIGATE POLLUTION; THESE ARE THE RENEWABLE ENERGIES SUCH AS SOLAR, BIOFUELS, HYDRO AND WIND TECHNOLOGIES. THERE IS NEED FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN BOTH HUMAN RESOURCES AND INSTITUTIONS.

MADAM PRESIDENT, IF NEGOTIATIONS ARE BEING DONE IN EARNEST, WE NEED TO COME UP WITH A DEAL THAT ENSURES THAT THE DEPTH OF ANNEX I COUNTRIES' EMISSIONS REDUCTION COMMITMENTS BALANCES THE SCALE OF THEIR COMPENSATORY SUPPORT FOR ADAPTATION. CONSISTENT AND SUFFICIENT FUNDING IS NEEDED, DIRECTLY LINKED TO ADAPTATION.

ADAPTATION CAN NO LONGER BE AN 'ADD-ON' ACTIVITY WITHIN A COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IS OBLIGATED THROUGH THE UNFCCC TO GIVE ADAPTATION THE IMPORTANCE THAT IT DESERVES. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL PUT AT RISK BILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN POOR VULNERABLE COUNTRIES AND COMMUNITIES OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD.

MADAM PRESIDENT, I WOULD LIKE TO URGE ALL OF US TO THRIVE TO COME UP WITH A FUTURE CLIMATE CHANGE AGREEMENT HERE IN CANCUN THROUGH A TRANSPARENT PROCESS THAT BALANCES ADAPTATION WITH MITIGATION, AS WELL AS AMBITION AND REALITY IN ORDER FOR THE COMPROMISES TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

WHILST EXPECTATIONS OF COP 16 ARE LOWERED IN COMPARISON TO COPENHAGEN, IT IS CRITICAL TO MAKE CANCUN THE PLACE WHERE COUNTRIES CAN REBUILD TRUST IN EACH OTHER AND RENEW CONFIDENCE IN THE UNFCCC PROCESS. IN THE EVENT OF A NO-DEAL SITUATION, CANCUN NEEDS TO PRODUCE A RELATIVELY PERSUASIVE AND REASONABLY STRONG FOUNDATION FOR A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE AND AMBITIOUS ENGAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA NEXT YEAR.

CANCUN NEEDS TO PRODUCE A MOMENTUM OR AT THE VERY LEAST A LIFELINE OUTCOME SO THAT COUNTRIES CAN BUILD ON THE REAL PROGRESS AND GOODWILL TO MOVE CLOSER TO A GLOBAL DEAL IN SOUTH AFRICA.

SOME OF THE CRITICAL BENCHMARKS OF SUCCESS INCLUDE REBUILDING OF CONFIDENCE IN THE PROCESS & RESTORING TRUST BETWEEN THE PARTIES. THERE IS ALSO NEED TO PROVIDE CLARITY ON LEGAL FORM OF THE PROCESS.

AS YOU ARE AWARE, SINCE COPENHAGEN THE KYOTO PROTOCOL HAS BECOME SYMBOLIC OF THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNFCCC.

CLARITY ON THE FUTURE OF THE SECOND COMMITMENT PERIOD OF THE KYOTO PROTOCOL, AND THE MEDIUM TERM OBJECTIVES IN RELATION TO A LEGALLY BINDING OUTCOME IN THE LCA WILL BE CRITICAL TO ENABLING OTHER AREAS OF CONVERGENCE TO MOVE FORWARD.

WE NEED TO SEE THE TWO-TRACK NEGOTIATION PROCESS MAINTAINED. DEVELOPED COUNTRIES MUST COMPLY WITH THEIR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CONVENTION, TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ADAPTATION ACTIONS AS WELL AS TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT VOLUNTARY MITIGATION ACTION BY DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTIES. FINANCE FROM DEVELOPED COUNTRIES MUST BE MEASURABLE, REPORTABLE AND VERIFIABLE.

FAILURE TO COME UP WITH AN AGREEMENT SOON WILL JEOPARDIZE THE ATTAINMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND CONSEQUENTLY POVERTY REDUCTION IN AFRICA.

TOGETHER, WE CAN, AND MUST TAKE DECISIVE MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE CLIMATE CHANGE THREAT HEAD-ON. DRAGGING THESE NEGOTIATIONS ON-AND-ON WILL ONLY RESULT IN THE EXTINCTION OF MANKIND, BEGINNING WITH THE DEVELOPING WORLD.