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SOUTH AFRICA AFRICA'S NATIONAL STATEMENT TO COP 16 / CMP 6

PRESENTED BY MINISTER EDNA MOLEWA

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government

Madame President, Colleagues

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the Government and people of Mexico for the warm hospitality since the moment we arrived in this beautiful city of Cancun, and for the excellent arrangements and facilities.

Let me also join other delegations in commending the leadership you and your team have demonstrated in managing this process and preparing Parties to seek convergence even on the most difficult issues.

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity, a challenge that compounds the existing multiple challenges already facing developing countries, such as drought, flooding, famine and disease. Here in these negotiation halls, it is us who have to make the unenviable decision of whether the global climate regime will be a multilaterally agreed and ambitious legally binding outcome, under the two track negotiating framework of the Bali Roadmap, OR whether it will simply be a regime where nations do whatever they can, whenever it is possible, with whoever they choose.

I am confident that in the remaining 12 hours of work we will make the right choice. Here in Cancun we must lay a firm foundation and the building blocks for a multi-laterally agreed climate change regime that is fair, inclusive and effective and that keeps the temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industiral levels. In fact more recent science indicates that 1.5 degrees is the safe limit. There are also short

term issues that we believe must be finalised here, namely on adaptation, fast start finance, technology transfer, capacity building and REDD plus. The greatest legacy we can bestow on the planet and future generations, is to honour the objectives, principles and provisions of the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Bali Roadmap. We must leave Cancun having agreed on overarching decisions on the legal form of the eventual outcome of negotiations under the Convention and the continued negotiation of a 2nd Commitment Period under the Kyoto Protocol. We must decide here in Cancún that the Kyoto Protocol HAS a future. We dare not delay.

We must step forward towards a multilateral climate change regime that strikes a balance between climate and development imperatives, and that ensures an equal balance of emphasis on adaptation and mitigation. Let me put this clearly – adaptation MUST be the heart of the agreement.

In the longer term and as agreed in Bali, the most effective and politically acceptable way for the future international climate change regime to urgently deliver on these requirements is through an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol to establish a 2nd Commitment Period, with a comparable legally binding agreement under the Convention.

The amendment to Annex B of the Kyoto Protocol would bind high levels of mitigation ambition by developed countries in accordance with the science. The legally binding agreement under the Convention would firstly bind an ambitious, absolute and comparable economy wide mitigation commitment for countries that are NOT party to the Kyoto Protocol. Secondly it would give developing countries the necessary time and resources to develop while simultaneously contributing to the global effort through relative mitigation action. Thirdly it must provide an international legal framework for adaptation to the inevitable impacts of climate change, and for the necessary financial and technology support for developing country adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Here, at the threshold of the next crucial stage of our collective and urgent battle against climate change, we must demonstrate bold and courageous leadership. To unlock the urgent progress that is needed, developed countries must take the lead with ambitious, binding and absolute emission reduction commitments. And developing countries will contribute their fair share through mitigation action that is supported by finance and technology, and both must be measured, reported and verified.

Madame President, in Africa, climate change will severely affect food and water security and the livelihoods of people in developing countries. It will especially have an impact on the lives of women, youth and the disabled. It will undermine the development and poverty eradication gains that we have made, and that we seek to achieve in the future. Without agreement on an international framework to enable and support the implementation of large scale adaptation programmes at all levels in developing countries, we are condemning these countries to a perilous future.

Madame President, in Copenhagen South Africa announced its intention to reduce emissions by 34% below our business as usual levels by 2020, and 42% by 2025. This is immensely challenging given our historical dependence on a coal based energy supply. We recognise that our development and poverty eradication priorities cannot be separated from transitioning to a green and climate resilient economy. We are actively working towards cleaner and renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, and building adaptation into our sustainable development and poverty eradication priorities. It is in that context that we are developing a Green Economy Strategy and we have a completed a National Climate Change Response Policy that is currently out for public comment. A carbon tax that would put a price on carbon and affect consumer and producer behaviour is under discussion.

Between now and 2012, we are piloting several alternative technologies such Concentrated Solar Power in the Northern Cape looking at achieving a capacity of 1,100 MW, scaling up to 5,000 MW by 2020. There are several other potential areas in

wind energy with potential of scaling up to 10,000 MW. In transportation we are looking at innovative transport systems in rail, and up-scaling the South African electric vehicle, the Joule. However, all these require technological and financial support in the order of billions of dollars. While we require the developed world to meet its obligation under the Convention and Bali Roadmap to support the mitigation and adaptation efforts of developing countries, we are not just sitting back and waiting. Our national development finance institutions have taken up the challenge and are committed to mobilising finance at a national level. However we need the developed world to support these efforts by meeting their financial obligations.

My delegation would like to see a success here in Cancun, that provides a firm foundation of further work to take place in Durban next year.

I look forward to welcoming you to Durban.

I thank you