

"It's time for action! Climate change is here"

National Climate Change Conference • Gallagher Estate - Midrand

17-21 October 2005



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**NATIONAL CLIMATE
CHANGE CONFERENCE**

"Climate Action Now!"

ACTION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

CONFERENCE STATEMENT

20 OCTOBER 2005

From 17-20 October 2005, we, South Africans from all spheres of life came together in Midrand to address the growing challenge of climate change and to prepare for its implications. Over 600 representatives from government, business, the scientific and academic communities, and civil society considered the science relating to climate change and key responses to the potential social and economic impacts associated with the compelling scientific evidence of climate change.

We agreed that climate change is a reality. This gathering reflects Government's commitment and determination to act on climate change and to shape policy informed by the best-available science. In opening the Conference, our Deputy President, the Hon. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka took the lead. She affirmed that South Africa will accept its responsibility to address climate change and will mobilise different economic sectors to meet this challenge. This South Africa will do in line with our strategy for accelerated and equitable growth and sustainable job creation and poverty alleviation.

The Conference gave a platform to eminent scientists and policy makers who outlined the present and likely impacts of climate change on South Africa. These include increases in the distribution and intensity of drought; reduced agricultural crop yields impacting on food security; potential species extinction; increased growth rates of invasive species; potentially catastrophic coral bleaching; and an increase in the areas affected by vector-borne diseases, including malaria. In all of these circumstances it is the poor who will be worst affected.

The Conference agreed that climate change is one of the most significant threats to sustainable development across the globe. Human activity contributes to climate change. This highlights the urgency of stabilising concentrations of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere - the

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ultimate objective of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. All nations should join in support of the international effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, with developed countries taking stronger action. The time for countries like South Africa to take further action on the basis of differentiated responsibility is here. We would like to see the emergence after 2012 of a strengthened Kyoto or Kyoto-plus regime that is more inclusive, flexible, cooperative and environmentally effective. In addition, the issue of adaptation needs to become a more prominent global priority in the climate regime.

Our government's firm commitment to climate action was voiced by Ministers with portfolios of Environment, Minerals and Energy, Water and Forestry, Land and Agriculture, and Science and Technology. The Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism called for a world-wide climate change awareness campaign to demystify and mainstream climate change, urging the need to make the link, in the minds of ordinary people around the world, between their actions and climate change. The Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs called for the promotion of food security in the face of the climate change threat. The Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry stressed how crucial water management will be in adapting to climate change impacts. The Minister of Science and Technology stressed the importance of a National Climate Change Research and Development Strategy as a key instrument to channel our efforts. The Minister of Minerals and Energy launched our Designated National Authority which will realize the potential of the Clean Development Mechanism and actively promote CDM projects in South Africa.

We, the representatives of government, business, the scientific and academic communities, and civil society present at this conference agree that our country must accelerate its national response as well as reinforce efforts in the international arena. We affirm that our climate change response is located within a sustainable development paradigm.

From a science and technology perspective, the broadening and deepening of our knowledge base on climate change is core to this accelerated response. This includes prediction, scenarios, early warning systems, disaster management, as well as adaptation and mitigation interventions for South Africa in particular and Africa in general. We agree to intensify efforts to use the best available science to address adaptive and mitigation actions in a coordinated manner. We commit our country to develop a critical mass of climate scientists to help grapple with the dynamics of climate change. We urge scientific institutions to put place measures to entice young scientists into this specialist field. We encourage emerging scientists to exploit the opportunities presented to them through available programmes. We affirm that the nature of climate change and the issues associated with it lends itself to the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to research and development.

As representatives from government, business and civil society, we resolve to take urgent action to meet our shared challenges in order to guarantee our common future. The following statements of intent by the key constituencies present at the conference demonstrate our common resolve to action and to mainstreaming climate change considerations in all our respective spheres of activity.

The undertakings by government to the following activities constitute the foundation of a Midrand Plan of Action that will lead our country's climate change programme into the future:

- Ensure the alignment, cohesion and coherence of government responses to climate change by coordinating and driving its climate change responses and interventions

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through the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Climate Change, its associated Inter-Departmental Committee and the multi-stakeholder National Committee on Climate Change;

- Continue the review of the National Climate Change Response Strategy;
- Initiate a detailed scenario building process to map out how South Africa can meet its Article 2 commitment to greenhouse gas stabilisation whilst ensuring its focus on poverty alleviation and job creation;
- Initiate a participatory climate change policy development process;
- Use the Air Quality Act to regulate greenhouse gas emissions and encourage a move to cleaner production, including the setting of emission standards that encourage energy efficiency;
- Compile sectoral action plans to implement the National Climate Change Response Strategy;
- Initiate a participatory national climate change research and development strategy development process that would coordinate and focus current research in a manner that delivers the critical mass of multi-disciplinary knowledge in focus areas while creating the opportunity to develop and retain human capital and research infrastructure;
- Drive increased research and innovation for the hydrogen economy using the research chairs programme and provide early demonstration of technologies for 2010;
- Strengthen the South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON) to facilitate long term climate research and establish a coordinating mechanism and establish a coordinating mechanism for South Africa's investment in earth observation as well as provide an interface with the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS);
- Establish South African National Energy Research Institute (SANERI);
- Develop a technology needs assessment to frame a programme of action for technology transfer;
- Facilitate the development of clean technologies for climate change mitigation;
- Actively support the strengthening of the CDM, particularly a streamlined methodology review process and mechanisms to reduce transactions costs for smaller, bundled projects, during the upcoming COP/MOP in Montreal in November 2005, without reopening the Marrakech Accords;
- Welcomes Eskom's re-statement of its commitment to displacing 10% of its coal-fired generating capacity with alternative sources by 2012 and its commitment to further reductions beyond 2012;
- Ensure that renewable energy and energy efficiency are included as viable alternatives to conventional fossil fuels in government's integrated energy planning process;
- Explore new funding sources and mechanism to support the rollout of renewable energy;
- Establish the National Energy Efficiency Agency to coordinate public and private investment in energy efficiency;

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- Consider climate change impacts in its water conservation and demand management initiatives;
- Review and reassess the ways in which South Africa operates its dams and quantifies the Ecological Reserve to account for a changing climate;
- Review the details of water-sharing agreements in the light of new physical realities;
- Examine the design and implementation of the water allocation reform process to ensure that climate change considerations are taken into account;
- Design and implement an outreach strategy to create awareness of the implications of climate change among stakeholders and customers in the water sector;
- Ensure that climate change considerations are included in the evaluation of new agricultural research and development projects;
- Review and revise agricultural policy to ensure climate change resilience; and
- Ensure that climate change is fully considered and reflected in the four elements of agricultural early warning systems, including: prior risk knowledge; monitoring and warning services; dissemination of warnings/information; and response capacity.

Furthermore the attached statements by our scientists, NGOs and business community demonstrate our collective resolve as a country to Climate Action Now!

Attachment 1: Scientists' Statement

A human influence on climate change in South Africa, southern Africa and Africa as a whole is real and identifiable, and observed trends are consistent with the best scientific models of climate response.

Observed climatic changes include:

- Widespread, significant increases in air temperature
- Regionally specific changes in rainfall patterns (including drying trends in western regions of southern Africa associated with rising temperatures over the Indian Ocean region)
- Increasing rainfall variability in some eastern regions.

Observed climatic changes are implicated in declining populations of some indigenous African species, both on land and in the ocean, and especially in coral species on east African tropical reef systems and in freshwater systems, *with locally significant impacts on human livelihoods and nature-based tourism.*

Southern Ocean islands show evidence of glacier retreat and ecosystem changes due to warming and drying trends, emphasizing the universality of these changes.

Future global warming of between 0.7 and 1.4°C is projected by the middle of this century with a high degree of consensus, but warming over continents could be even greater. Continued warming and climate change beyond 2050 is very likely, but its rate depends on patterns of global fossil fuel use, and poorly understood feedbacks from the biosphere.

Ongoing climate change may cause a widespread increase in evaporation, and further drying over western regions of southern Africa, including the Western Cape and Northern Cape Provinces. Greater rainfall variability and increasing rainfall intensity over eastern regions is likely, with positive implications for deep soil water recharge events, but a greater erosivity of rainfall events. *These changes all have far-reaching implications for water resource management strategies.*

Projected impacts of projected climate changes on natural ecosystems and indigenous species are overwhelmingly negative, including potential destabilization of Kalahari dune systems in the west, but higher rates of bush encroachment projected in eastern regions. Potential species extinctions are projected throughout southern Africa, but particularly in the western regions of southern Africa focused in the Succulent Karoo and Fynbos Biomes. *These impacts on species will impact negatively on human livelihoods, especially of the rural poor.*

Key sectors such as health and agriculture urgently require updated assessments of their vulnerability to climate change, early indications suggest *significant impacts on rural livelihoods and food security.*

Overall, the projected biophysical and socio-economic impacts of ongoing and projected climate change in Africa, southern Africa and South Africa are overwhelmingly negative, indicating a strong need both for developing adaptive responses and a focus on facilitating global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Significant scientific uncertainties remain, but in no way undermine the key messages above. Coordinated multi-disciplinary research is needed to address these, focusing at least on regional projections of changes and their biophysical and socio-economic impacts, feedbacks

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to the climate system from the biosphere and marine system, interactions with other disturbances such as fire and invasive species, and the development of adaptive strategies.

Attachment 2: Business Unity South Africa Statement

Business is working with Government at a number of levels, from the Task Team on Accelerated Shared Growth led by the Deputy President, through development of sectoral strategies, to enterprise level economic and social investment projects. Business believes that the 6% economic growth target that must be reached to begin to meaningfully address unemployment and poverty, should be pursued within a national framework of sustainable development.

Business welcomes the recognition in the National Climate Change Response Strategy that Business has a role to play in addressing the challenges of climate change and is committed to working with Government and other stakeholders in meeting these challenges.

Business believes that a national approach to climate change rests on three broad areas of work, namely

- development of an accurate sustainable national greenhouse gas inventory covering all sources of emissions
- development of a national adaptation plan
- incorporation of mitigation approaches in sectoral development strategies.

Business continues to advocate the need for greater coherence in Government policy both in its development and implementation. In this regard, we remain concerned that the implementation of the National Climate Change Response Strategy still does not form an integral component of other appropriate national policies and strategies and urges Government to address co-ordination in this regard.

Business recognises that any attempts to develop strategies to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions must be based on a solid understanding of both the amount and sources of all gases to climate change and must be pursued within the context of the need to increase industrial production.

Business Unity South Africa therefore concluded an agreement with Minister van Schalkwyk on Monday, this week, to collaborate on the establishment of a national greenhouse gas inventory. Once a set of national guidelines that take into account national circumstances, has been developed, all businesses operating in the sectors identified in the International Guidelines for emissions will be encouraged to submit emission data

In recognition of the significant contribution that industrial energy use makes to greenhouse gas emissions Business Unity South Africa and a number of its affiliates and individual companies concluded an agreement with the Minister of Minerals and Energy, earlier this year, to collaborate towards the achievement of an industrial energy efficiency target. A joint technical committee has been established to implement this agreement. It is intended that the measurement and reporting methodology for energy efficiency will be developed in such a way as to ensure compatibility with requirements for energy reporting for a national greenhouse gas inventory.

Business welcomes the launch of the Designated National Authority for the CDM and looks forward to working with the authority to encourage development of CDM projects.

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The CDM provides an opportunity for companies to go beyond minimum requirements in respect of energy efficiency and direct emissions and as such should provide significant impetus to mitigation efforts at enterprise level. In this regard ways to encourage participation of SMMEs in this mechanism need to be investigated.

However we remain concerned at the intensely bureaucratic approach to project approval that has been established by the CDM Executive Board internationally and believes that the South African national position for the upcoming Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change should include ways to address this issue.

The application of the additionality principle in evaluating projects also presents significant cause for concern. For example national attempts to legislate on energy efficiency could compromise the eligibility of energy efficiency projects, thus undermining the spirit of the CDM, which is to encourage sustainable development in developing countries. Business notes that other developing countries have recognised the potential constraints posed by this principle and believes that more detailed consideration of this issue needs to be undertaken at an international level.

Business believes that as the major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Africa, South Africa needs to play a much stronger role in international deliberations. We look forward to working with Government and other stakeholders in strengthening national positions for such forums.

Business congratulates Government on the convening of this Conference and looks forward to further engagements on this important topic.

Attachment 3: SA-CAN statement

The South African Climate Action Network (SACAN) will:

- Raise public awareness of climate change and the actions that can be taken by individuals, institutions and authorities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the adverse impacts of climate change;
- Build the capacity of civil society to engage with business institutions and other stakeholders to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies;
- Commit to constructive participation in a consultative process to develop national climate change policy;
- Advocate progressive policies and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including:
 - a target of 20% of electricity from renewable energy by 2020, with development of additional targets for solar water heating and bio-fuels;
 - mandatory energy efficiency codes and standards for housing and other buildings, vehicles and industrial processes;
 - development of a comprehensive public transport system and other measures to assist in the reduction of private vehicle use and congestion;
 - adaptation strategies to be implemented in an integrated and cross sectoral manner;
 - formal South African commitments within the post 2012 multilateral regime;
- Promote universal endorsement of the global objective of keeping global warming below 2⁰ C;
- Raise awareness of the limitations of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), the undue emphasis placed on carbon trading in strategies for renewable energy and efficiency and the need for rigorous application of the sustainable development criteria by the designated national authority (DNA) to ensure that negative local impacts are not offset against global benefits;
- Rigorously investigate means for achieving equity in the post-2012 climate change regime;
- Call on the private sector to invest in local level renewable energy strategies that create jobs, alleviate poverty and mitigate climate change;
- Call on government to commit adequate resources to public education and developing the capacity of communities to participate in achieving affordable access to sustainable energy services; and
- Highlight the important role that biodiversity plays in human health.

SACAN particularly welcomes this process of consultation and sees this as the beginning of a more coherent approach to developing national policy.