



MINISTRY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM

10th UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE:
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP10): 6TH TO 17TH DECEMBER 2004

CONTRIBUTION BY MS. REJOICE MABUDAFHASI, SOUTH AFRICAN DEPUTY MINISTER
OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM, ON THE OCCASION OF THE HIGH LEVEL
SEGMENT PANEL DISCUSSIONS DURING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING OF THE
CONVENTION.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, allow me to start today by sharing with you the words of the first woman African Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Wangar Maathai of Kenya. In her acceptance speech in Oslo last week she said:

“Activities that devastate the environment and societies continue unabated. Today we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life-support system. We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own.”

Mr. Moderator, allow me to express our appreciation to the Government of Argentina for hosting this tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Climate Change – the importance of these deliberations for present and future generations is underscored by the natural splendour of your country and continent.

This year we are celebrating the first decade of the Convention. In South Africa we are also celebrating a tenth anniversary – the first ten years of South African democracy. We too have reviewed progress, and the effectiveness of actions designed to improve the quality of life of our people in an environmentally sustainable manner.

In many respects the results have been exceptional – but as with this Convention there remain a number of serious challenges. Our Government has targeted our national priorities to address the gap between the two economies in South Africa – the first, developed, affluent and globally competitive, and the second characterized by poverty and underdevelopment. This ‘second economy’ is the reality for the majority of South Africans who are also most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. If we are to ‘assist the Earth to heal her wounds’ then we must work to bridge this divide.

Moderator, it is clear that the developing and the developed world shares a central challenge – to urgently address climate change. Meeting this challenge requires direct engagement and action from all parties.

It requires the specific and measurable transfer of environmentally sound technology and skills from the developed to the developing world – which thus far has been sporadic – to assist in meeting the challenges of adapting to the impacts of climate change and limiting the growth of emissions. It requires the development of new capacity and sufficient levels of funding to fast-

track implementation. Perhaps most importantly it requires the political will to meet the commitments already made in earlier meetings of the COP and to move beyond narrow agendas - towards a united and coordinated global plan of action.

We should be promoting more collaborative research projects between developed and developing countries. I am aware that there have been contributions to joint projects by some developed country Parties to the Convention, but the scale and type of this support has to be significantly increased if a lasting impact is to be made on the planning and resourcing of sustainable development programmes for adaptation.

At the very least regional centres of expertise need to be strengthened to advance our understanding and reduce uncertainties regarding the causes, effects, magnitude and timing of climate change, and the economic and social consequences of mitigation strategies. What is also critical is the need for more improved and more affordable access to climate change related information and opportunities for training and participation in climate change research programmes.

There needs to be a greater awareness created that it is possible to establish smart partnerships with the private sector and non-government organizations to undertake adaptation programmes, particularly those relating to environmental rehabilitation.

In summary then, what is required by developing countries to address the challenges of adaptation is support and resources for the establishment, at least at the regional level, of a core base of knowledge and information infrastructure, the development of local technologies, the transfer of adaptation and mitigation technologies, and community-based interventions to assist in terms of 'coping with the burden' of the impacts of climate change.

Moderator, it behoves us as we continue our deliberations, to recall Wangar Maathai's advice: "In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now."

I thank you.

NEW VERSION

The Convention after 10 years: accomplishments and future challenges

Deputy Minister Ms Rejoice T Mabudafhasi

15 Dec 2004, Buenos Aires, COP 10

Moderator, Ministers, panelists and distinguished delegates,

Accomplishments

In reflecting on the past ten years, South Africa notes some important achievements in the multi-lateral process. We particularly appreciate the process of operationalising the Convention over the last decade, and the mechanisms being developed under the Kyoto Protocol. South Africa has taken up the challenge of climate change and will make active use of the Clean Development Mechanism.

Future Challenges

South Africa strongly believes a multi-lateral cooperative process is needed to effectively address the challenge of

that the proposed seminar series provides us with such a process, and would like to engage constructively in these seminars.