

Submission by South Africa
DURBAN PLATFORM FOR ENHANCED ACTION
26 April 2013

South Africa welcomes the opportunity to submit its views and proposals on implementation of all the elements of decision 1/CP.17 related to the work of the ADP on the development of a legal instrument, protocol or agreed outcome with legal force applicable to all countries, to be adopted by 2015 and be fully operational no later than 2020. At this point we submit a vision and attributes of the future agreement, in the spirit of contributing to the work of the ADP as it moves to a more focused mode of work during 2013.

VISION

The future agreement, which will be under the Convention, should build on the agreements and institutions that have been developed over the years under the UNFCCC, rather than a renegotiation of the system. It should therefore fill in the gaps to enhance action to address climate change. The future agreement should take forward the sustainable development discourse and challenge any conceptual opposition between environmental integrity and economic development, by maximising economic opportunities and co-benefits of investing in a low carbon future.

It should provide equitable access to sustainable development for developing countries, while ensuring environmental integrity sufficient to provide for the prosperity and well-being of future generations. Taking into account developmental imperatives, and the particular priority given to poverty eradication by developing countries, it should have clear co-benefits to participation.

The future agreement should be science based and commit Parties to a global goal of keeping global temperature rise below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. It should integrate actions on mitigation and adaptation with the enabling means of implementation that correspond to the global goal.

Developed countries should commit explicitly to the realisation of the long-term finance goal of mobilising US\$100 billion by 2020 for climate change finance. The agreement should balance funding for mitigation and adaptation in the long-term, as one way of specifically addressing the concerns of the most vulnerable countries. More generally, it should give priority to adaptation at the same level as mitigation.

The future agreement should take into account of the dynamic nature of the climate change challenge and therefore not attempt to be an ultimate solution, but it should rather govern climate action for a finite period of time, with automatic incremental adjustment processes, one following the other e.g. 2020-2030, 2030-2040 etc. While having broad participation and ambitious commitments from Parties, it should provide enough flexibility in order to have a system that is cost effective and fair for all.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE FUTURE AGREEMENT

The future agreement should be a legally binding protocol under the Convention. It should have both developmental safeguards (i.e. no restrictions on the efforts by developing countries to eradicate poverty) and environmental safeguards (i.e. an effective global response).

While the equity debate and a more nuanced application of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities is at the heart of the negotiations of the future agreement, these discussions cannot usefully take place in abstraction. It will not be useful to renegotiate the annexes to the Convention. Equity and appropriate differentiation can be better and more meaningfully be advanced through designing effective commitments and actions, taking into account the context of historical responsibility, current and emerging capability, and development needs.

The future agreement should contain binding absolute emission reduction targets for developed countries and relative emission reduction targets for developing countries, e.g. improvements in emissions intensity, combined with incentives for developing countries to pursue low carbon development pathways. Developed countries must implement zero carbon development plans and outline the full pathways and trajectories to get there.

The future agreement should give equal priority to adaptation. All Parties have responsibility for adaptation in their countries, with those in need being supported. Funding for adaptation is at the heart of the new instrument. Balance of adaptation and mitigation must be maintained operationally, in the realisation of the financial goal that is also placed in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation, including measurable, reportable and verifiable progress towards financial goals in the medium- and long-term.

The future agreement should be simple and flexible, based on an incentivising and enabling approach that catalyses further action. It should realise practical ways to strengthen the catalytic role of the Convention in encouraging multilateral bodies, the public and private sectors and civil society, building on synergies among activities and processes, as a means to support mitigation and adaptation in a coherent and integrated manner.

To make provision for sufficient flexibility, the future agreement could have a hybrid approach with commitments determined top-down and actions pledged bottom-up. It should provide Parties with a fixed menu of tools as a basis to implement the action most appropriate in the context of their national circumstances, with commitments and actions subject to international verification. It should be rules-based and have a robust review, assessment and compliance system.

The future agreement should be able to respond to developments in science, for example through a mechanism to increase mitigation ambition and the associated adaptation needs in order to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.