

ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF UNITED  
NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE COP17/CMP7 HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

DURBAN

6 DECEMBER 2011,

Excellencies Heads of State and Government and leaders of delegations,

Honourable UN Secretary General Mr Ban Ki-moon,

Ministers and Deputy Ministers,

Distinguished negotiators,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to welcome you to the High Level Segment of COP 17/CMP 7 in Durban, one of the holiday capitals of our country.

The past week has seen extensive preparations, formal and informal meetings, planning, negotiations and manoeuvring, to ensure that the success of the High-Level Segment.

I can safely assure my colleagues the Heads of State and Government as well as the UN Secretary General that your delegations were definitely not on holiday. They worked extremely hard to bring us to this level.

As Parties, as we meet in Durban, we are agreed on the facts and impacts of climate change which are already evident all around us.

We are agreed that this global challenge requires a global solution. However, different positions still prevail on some critical points.

However, it is important that there is common ground on the elements that will remain critical in reaching any agreement.

These are multilateralism, environmental integrity, common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities, equity, and honouring of all international commitments and undertakings made in the climate change process.

These principles have formed the basis of climate change negotiations over the years.

Only by remaining true to them, through the Party-driven process, will we be able to achieve a credible response to this challenge.

I therefore encourage the parties to continue to apply these principles in the discussions and ensure that the final outcome remains faithful to these principles.

We need to show the world that Parties are ready to address the problems in a practical manner, and that they are willing to forgo the national interest at times, for the interest of humanity, no matter how difficult this may be.

As we begin the high level segment, we need to re-build trust and to re-assure one another of honest intent and commitment to find solutions for the problems caused by climate change.

By now all of us understand that Durban is a decisive moment for the future of the multilateral rules-based regime, which has evolved over many years under the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Commitment Period of the Kyoto Protocol is about to come to an end.

The question that has been left unanswered from Bali is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commitment period. This has now become dependent on the decision on the legal nature of the outcome of the negotiations under the Convention.

It is also clear that if this question is not resolved, the outcome on other matters will become extremely difficult.

In order to find a solution, Parties need to be re-assured that should some of them commit to a 2<sup>nd</sup> Commitment Period under the Kyoto Protocol in a legally binding manner, others would be ready to commit to a legally binding regime in the near future.

Underlying this request for re-assurance is the insistence that all Parties will implement the obligations and commitments previously undertaken, and that all will share the load to address the problem.

Parties also need assurances that adequate and sustainable long term funding will be delivered, and that the implementation of all agreements will continue without an implementation gap occurring.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We need to make a decision here in Durban that includes both the now and future aspects of these re-assurances that are needed.

On the now and immediate, we need to agree on the adoption of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Commitment Period of the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the possibility of enhanced mechanisms and to decide on the eligibility for participation in these enhanced mechanisms.

Such an agreement should entail the adoption of an amendment of Annexure B of the Kyoto Protocol with re-assurances that Parties will implement the amendment domestically by the end of 2012.

We must also agree on the formalization and implementation of the mitigation pledges of developed countries and the rules of comparability between the pledges of those Parties of the Kyoto Protocol and those Parties outside the Kyoto Protocol.

Therefore, the rules to assure comparability need to be finalized as soon as possible.

An Agreement on adaptation, the establishment of the Green Climate Fund, finance, technology transfer and capacity building must also be part of the agreement in Durban.

For the future, Parties need to pronounce on the legal nature of the outcome of the future multilateral rules based system.

This should be done in a manner that would be equal in nature to those decided on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commitment Period.

In this future multilateral rules' based system, the level of ambition and the fact that all Parties will collectively have to do more, will have to be addressed.

We wish to underscore the point that developed countries have the responsibility to take the lead in addressing the climate change challenge.

They must lead the global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And they must also lead through providing support to developing countries in their mitigation actions and efforts to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change.

This is consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility enshrined in the international convention on climate change.

It is common knowledge that developed countries benefitted from a high level of emissions for their own development.

It is therefore fair that developing countries be provided developmental space in a sustainable way so that they too may develop and eradicate the poverty that continues to afflict their people.

We must agree that all Parties, will have to do more to reach the agreed long-term global goal of limiting average temperature increase to below 2 degrees Celsius.

We must agree as well, that the international community must honour the international commitments and undertakings made under the climate change process and not to shy away from these decisions.

Parties must secure an enhanced multilateral rules-based response to climate change that is equally binding on all.

Therefore, a process needs to be established for which the 2013-2015 review could provide valuable input.

This process should also take into account what science prescribes, as well as the outcome of the 5<sup>th</sup> Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report and other work that would have been done, under the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action under the Convention and the Subsidiary Bodies.

Parties have to consider the type of process that will be required and a specific timeframe to conclude the work.

The objective would be for the multilateral rules based system, binding on all Parties, to be implemented by no later than 2020.

Colleagues Heads of States and Government and representatives,

Esteemed participants,

Let me briefly name two other crucial elements, namely; adaptation and finance.

Real action on adaptation is an essential element of the outcome. It is also a key priority for many developing countries, particularly Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries and the African continent.

The time has come for the world to move away from analysis, study and research, to identifying practical adaptation actions that can be implemented on the ground.

There can be no dispute that research and analysis are important aspects of adaptation actions. However, we now need more practical action.

In this regard, the Adaptation Committee must be constituted. Its functions must be decided upon so that it can begin its work.

The Adaptation Committee should play an important role in bringing into focus, in a coherent and holistic manner, what needs to be done as far as adaptation is concerned.

The committee must bring an end to the current fragmented approach to adaptation in the Convention.

The link with the funding, technology transfer, mechanisms and networks and capacity building for real and tangible adaptation actions must be established. This will give effect to the agreement that equal priority must be given to adaptation and mitigation.

And ladies and gentlemen,

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) represents a centre piece for a broader set of outcomes for Durban. Developing countries demand a prompt start for the Fund through its early and initial capitalization.

The early capitalization of the Fund and the issue of long term funding present a significant political challenge, given the current economic situation in many developed countries which, of course, is fully appreciated.

Another challenge to overcome is the lack of confidence from developing countries in the delivery and transparency of the pledged Fast Start Finance.

I am confident that all Parties will make a special effort and show the required leadership to creatively provide these assurances that can lead to consensus on all the outstanding issues.

There is a lot of work to be done this week, to bring the work of Durban to a fruitful and successful conclusion.

I wish the parties well during this final push towards a meaningful outcome in Durban.

It is only by working together that we will be able to save tomorrow today.

I Thank you