

**OPENING ADDRESS BY COP17/CMP7 PRESIDENT,
MINISTER MAITE NKOANA-MASHABANE**

**COP18/CMP8 OPENING CEREMONY
DOHA, QATAR**

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Your Excellency

Your Excellency Mr Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah,
President Designate of COP18/CMP8

Distinguished Executive Secretary, Ms Christiana Figueres

Distinguished members of the Presidium

Ministers and Heads of Delegations

Ladies and gentlemen

First of all, I would like to thank our host, the State of Qatar, for the warm welcome in here in Doha and for their hospitality.

It is my honour to address you today, a year after we, as Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, agreed to the watershed package of decisions in Durban. I am humbled to look back on the momentous effort that brought about this extraordinary outcome. We not only

succeeded in agreeing on a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol – something which seemed almost impossible in the year leading up to COP17/CMP7 – but we also agreed to launch a process that will develop the future legal framework applicable to all Parties to address climate change from 2020. Bolstering these two landmark decisions, were the set of decisions on long-term cooperative action under the Convention, including the decision to establish the Green Climate Fund. Few would have thought that Durban would produce such a robust and comprehensive outcome.

I am proud to have presided over a conference that will be regarded for many years to come as a shining example of what multilateralism can achieve when there is all round respect for the principles of inclusiveness, transparency and the need for mutual reassurances. The significance of Durban reached far beyond the climate change issue. It was a great triumph for multilateralism in a broader sense. Durban was an example of how issues of global concern, such as climate change, can be effectively and equitably addressed through the authority, legitimacy and resources that only a multilateral solution can offer. I am reminded of an African proverb that speaks to this principle. It says “If you want to walk fast, walk alone, if you want to walk far, walk with others.” We have walked a long way from Durban to Doha; multilateralism has served us well, let us now add urgency to our resolve to tackle the climate change challenge.

The latest science tells us that urgent action is needed if we are to avoid a global catastrophe in the next generation. We

cannot waiver in our resolve to rise to this challenge. While Durban restored the international community's trust in the UNFCCC process, we cannot for a moment waiver in our dedication. We need to build on it to ensure that we have in place an effective policy framework for mitigation and adaptation action now, up to 2020, and beyond. Climate change is the most serious sustainable development challenge of our time – we must act now.

As I hand over the COP/CMP Presidency to His Excellency Mr Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, I call on all Parties to make sure that Doha stays true to the legacy of Durban. It is my sincere hope that this conference will deliver an outcome which will send a clear signal that the UNFCCC process is working: that it is delivering decisions which will lead to effective climate actions. The necessary political will to reach consensus is not just the responsibility of the COP President, it is the responsibility of each and every Party.

I have no doubt that in order for us to have a successful outcome here in Doha, the Parties will need to achieve balanced progress in the work of the three working groups, taking into account the different levels of maturity of the work in each one. This means adopting a ratifiable second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol; successfully concluding the work under the AWG-LCA; and finding an appropriate space for residual and perennial issues to be discussed either under the Conference of the Parties, the Subsidiary Bodies, or newly established institutions. This will set the stage for constructive work under the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action as soon as its plan of work

has been agreed to here in Doha. It would be a big step backwards for the ADP to become the LCA in another name.

We need to move forward on our common post-2020 perspective under the ADP without delay. We need to explore options for actions that can close the ambition gap with a view to ensuring the highest possible mitigation and adaptation actions by all the Parties to UNFCCC, supported by the necessary means of implementation.

Crucial to our endeavour is scaled up financial support to implement the decisions already taken. As you will recall, we agreed to establish a work programme on long-term finance. I hope that Parties will agree to take bold actions on the basis of the report and recommendations of the co-chairs that can take this issue to the next level. Without high level political commitment towards the issue of finance, our negotiations will be troubled. An agreement on finance is central to any outcome both within the pre-2020 perspective and the post-2020 perspective. Such an agreement has to include transparency of disbursement of the Fast Start Financing provided up to 2012; and how the funding of US\$10 billion in 2012 will be scaled up in the period up to 2020 in order to reach the target of US\$100 billion per year by 2020 as pledged.

Your Excellencies

We have an opportunity here in Doha to make history once again, by opening a new chapter that will lead us beyond 2020. The UNFCCC process was reinvigorated in Durban,

and Doha must set the stage for a new era of cooperation, a new era of sustainable development. Let us focus our minds during the next two weeks, first on the implementation of the delicate and balanced agreement we have already reached, and then on doing the groundwork for the future.

Tomorrow I will be launching a publication called “Thuto ya Batho: Teachings from my people: Women adapt to climate change” as a legacy of South Africa’s COP17/CMP7 Presidency. The book is a tribute to ordinary people, especially women who are on the frontline, who daily face the harsh realities of climate realities on the ground, while we as negotiators and political leaders discuss these issues, sometimes with questionable urgency, in isolation, and in air conditioned rooms, global responses that could address their plight.

I know that COP18/CMP8 can be a success. I saw the spirit of cooperation and compromise last year in Durban. I was grateful and humbled by the constructive approach taken by Ministers and negotiators at COP17/CMP7. I believe that we were able to come together and come to an agreement last year, because we all realised why we are here; why we keep coming back year after year to engage in this difficult process. We owe it to our people, the global citizenry. We owe our children a safer future than what they currently face.

In Durban we introduced you to our tradition of resolving intractable issues, the Indaba, which created the space for real conversations amongst the Parties. Under-pinning the

Indaba as a mechanism for resolving big issues, is the principle of Ubuntu which we also wove into our discussions in Durban. As you will all recall, Ubuntu means none of us can do without the others. Fundamentally as a person, I am because you are, I exist because you exist. Thus we are all inextricably linked to each other for survival.

Mr. President, Delegates

Of all the legacies we bestowed on this process, we hope that the spirit of Ubuntu will remain an enduring characteristic of these negotiations.

Mr President, Delegates and Friends

I wish you all the best for your work here in Doha.

Thank you.