

Durban Climate Change talks
High Level Segment
International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) on behalf of trade unions

Thank you.

My name is Sdomo Dlamini, President of the Congress of South African Trade Unions COSATU.

Chair,

The international labour movement came to this meeting with a very clear objective: to mobilise support for those governments willing to give climate change and future generations a chance.

Some of us still have concerns about risks for jobs, but we all know inaction means that many more jobs and livelihoods in particular here in Africa will be lost.

With sufficient political will, ambition on climate change can promote sustainable investments and lead to new jobs. These green jobs, accompanied by a Just Transition based on decent work, rights, social protection and new skills can build support for change.

Chair, the economic crisis must not be used as an excuse to suspend commitments on emission reductions or climate financing. We are concerned that we might leave Durban with an empty shell or the prospects of a loose voluntary climate deal.

Our experience as trade unions shows that only legally binding commitments can ensure compliance. We must not give up on this, and we call on all governments, in particular the United States of America, to take their responsibility.

Unions will not stop until every last union member commits to transform our societies and protect the climate. We need the same level of commitment from governments here in Durban.

Finally, Chair, on behalf of more than 30 million working people in South Africa and millions more around the world, allow me to repeat our plea to reach a good deal, one that will be up to the challenge of securing dignity for workers in a climate-safe world.

Amantla!