

**STATEMENT BY H.E. PRESIDENT JACOB ZUMA TO THE OPENING SESSION  
OF THE PARIS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE**

**30 NOVEMBER 2015, PARIS**

Your Excellency, President François Hollande

United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Ban ki-Moon

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour to address you here in Paris – a city that has become a symbol of humanity and solidarity, with the international community united against the recent terrorist atrocities committed here. We once again convey our deepest sympathies to the Governments and people of France, Russian Federation, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Kenya, Iraq, Nigeria, Mali and other victims of terror throughout the world over the past few months. These events serve only to motivate us all to come together to address issues of global concern, whether it is international peace and security or climate change.

Excellencies

For South Africa, the outcome of the Paris conference has significant meaning. As Leaders, we are today because of the historic and bold decisions we took in Durban to enhance the implementation of the Convention. You would recall that before Durban, this multilateral process on climate change was under serious threat. South Africa felt duty bound to ensure that it emerged from Durban intact to give hope to humanity. For South Africa, the Durban decision to enhance the implementation of the Convention was of paramount importance, because the impacts of climate change are harshest on the poor. Climate change is a major global challenge that requires an urgent global response.

Therefore, as Leaders, we have to be true to the Durban mandate by agreeing on how we will enhance action under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), without rewriting or replacing the Convention. Our mandate from Durban include three critical areas: closing the ambition gap in the pre-2020 period; urgent entry into force of the Doha Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol; and the adoption of a new agreement for the post-2020 period. We have to act on all these areas of the Durban mandate if we are to build trust and create a platform for the post-2020 agreement. Developed countries, that have the greatest historical responsibility, must honour their existing commitments and continue to take the lead to address climate change. We are here today largely due to industrial policy choices that now threaten development.

#### Excellencies

South Africa has taken a big step-forward in communicating an ambitious INDC. It also includes a commitment to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, through a set of national adaptation goals. And we have indicated the financial and investment requirements for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Paris agreement should address the interests of all countries and empower everyone to contribute their best efforts, based on equity and differentiation.

#### Excellencies

Since developing countries already experience climate change impacts, the Paris agreement cannot focus only on mitigation. Climate change impacts are driven by global inaction on mitigation, thereby deepening the adaptation burden on developing countries. A Global Goal for Adaptation must therefore be part of the Paris agreement. This Goal must express adaptation as a global responsibility that requires a global response: The less mitigation actions are taken, the more societies will be forced to adapt and to contend with loss and damage.

We also need commitments of on-going means of implementation in the form of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building for the period beyond 2020 to enable developing countries to implement their contributions. Climate

finance must be scaled up significantly beyond the US\$100 billion mark for the post-2020 period. A Paris agreement that is hollow and weak on the provision of means of implementation to support adaptation and mitigation efforts of developing countries, will not be acceptable and will furthermore undermine our collective response.

#### Excellencies

As we finalise the work we started in Durban, it is an honour for South Africa to lead the Group of 77 and China. The G77 and China represents the realities and aspirations of the majority of the world's population. As developing countries, we take our responsibilities seriously and are already making meaningful contributions within our respective capabilities. The unprecedented commitment shown by developing countries in communicating their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) must be recognised. These contributions should be seen against the reality that poverty eradication and the need for sustainable development are the overriding priorities for developing countries. We should also realise that developing countries now have the greatest mitigation potential, particularly in larger developing countries. Not providing finance, technology and capacity-building support to these efforts will inevitably lead to us falling far short of our goal to limit temperature increase to less than two degrees Celsius. If Paris is to succeed, the concerns of the Group must therefore be heard.

#### Excellencies

In conclusion, we as Leaders have a specific responsibility to use this Leaders' Event to mobilise the political will required to ensure that our negotiators present an agreement that reflects of our common resolve. We must give our negotiators the space and time they need to complete their work in preparation for the high-level segment in the second week of the Conference.

This Paris Conference is a crucial juncture in our fight against climate change. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to rise to the occasion and conclude a meaningful agreement here that will enhance collective, ambitious and equitable international action.

I thank you.