

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR DEREK HANEKOM, MINISTER OF TOURISM OF SOUTH AFRICA, HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE KATOWICE CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (COP24/CMP14/CMA1-3), KATOWICE, POLAND, 12 DECEMBER 2018

Minister Kurtyka, I congratulate you on your election as the COP 24 President and commend you for the excellent organization of this meeting. I would also like to convey the highest regards of His Excellency President Cyril Ramaphosa and the people of South Africa to the Government and people of Poland for their warm hospitality.

Excellencies,

Climate change poses the single most serious threat to Africa's development and prosperity. During the past few years South Africa has experienced devastating weather events. Several regions of our country faced their worst drought in decades. The impact was felt most severely by the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of our society.

The Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the impacts of a 1.5 degrees Celsius temperature rise, confirmed the conclusion of the international scientific community that we are already seeing the consequences of climate change for people, nature and livelihoods and that the worst is yet to come.

Africa has been forced to adapt to the reality of a changing climate and is keenly aware that only rapid and far-reaching transformation of the global economy will prevent a much greater catastrophe. We are therefore here today to impress upon the international community to heed the call of science and to act before it is too late.

Excellencies,

A science, equity and rules-based multilateral regime is essential, if we are to address the global challenge of climate change and to protect our sustainable development gains and eradicate poverty. We have strong foundations for this already in the form

of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement.

Our task here in Katowice is to conclude the Paris Agreement Work Programme to provide the technical specificity and robust rules, procedures and guidelines that will allow for full and balanced implementation of the Paris Agreement. Our duty to the current and future generations is to provide a platform for progression on all issues in the Paris Agreement to ensure that the Global Goals are achieved.

We must resist backsliding and all attempts to erode, fragment and undermine multilateralism.

Excellencies,

For South Africa, as an African and developing country, achieving specificity on adaptation and finance are overarching priorities at this COP. Modalities, procedures and guidelines on transparency are also important outcomes of this conference, within the principles and understandings reached in Paris.

We emphasise the importance of parity between adaptation and mitigation and enabling the progressive development of the multilateral approach to adaptation, which has only recently been acknowledged as a global problem, requiring a global solution with recognition of adaptation actions. To achieve this progression and evolution foreseen in the Paris Agreement, we need further technical work on guidelines and methodologies for adaptation information. The progress on adaptation thus far at this Conference has been far from adequate.

Similarly, additional, adequate and predictable finance is required to empower developing countries to enhance their action and contribute meaningfully to the global effort. The link between support and ambition and action is clear and therefore our work on the post-2020 finance arrangements should be geared towards ensuring that there is clarity on how this support has been and will continue to be provided to developing countries and how it will be linked to the transparency system and the global stocktake.

Excellencies,

South Africa is experiencing slow and fragile economic growth and our economy is burdened by structural problems, such as high-levels of unemployment and inequality. However, despite these challenges we are scaling-up our current ambitious efforts to address climate change. We are confident that by drawing on international best practices sourced from conferences such as this, making good use of international support and realising the full potential of our own human and material resources, we will succeed in securing a just transition to a low carbon economy.

We are encouraged by successes achieved thus far. These include our Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (REIPPP), which has unlocked in excess of 14 billion US dollars for power generation. This includes 3,74 billion dollars in foreign direct investment. The programme has already achieved a reduction of 25,3 mega tonnes of carbon emissions and the saving of 2,99 million kilolitres of water. Other achievements include the Green Transport Strategy, charting a new area in public transportation; an Energy Efficiency Programme in Industry; and a Public Employment Programme focusing on ecosystem reliance and adaptation. We are investing almost 6% of our GDP on adaptation measures. South Africa has the requisite institutions, accountability and governance systems to make best use of available financial resources.

Excellencies,

We need to support each other and not abandon one other. There is an African saying that “Together we stand strong, alone we falter and stumble”. This is the time to stand together. This is the time to cooperate. This is the time to invest in the future of our children and grandchildren. This is the time for investment in rapid and far-reaching climate action.

I thank you.