

**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR EDNA MOLEWA, MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
AFFAIRS OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF  
THE BONN CLIMATE CONFERENCE (COP23/CMP13/CMA1-2)  
16 NOVEMBER 2017**

*Your Excellency, Mr. Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji and President of COP23, Excellencies,*

Nobel Peace Prize winner, Anti-Apartheid icon and father of South Africa, former President Nelson Mandela once said: “When people are determined they can overcome anything”.

Mr President, despite geo-political uncertainty in the global climate change space, I would like to emphasise that the Paris Agreement is irreversible and will not be re-negotiated. We are resolute in ensuring its implementation. As Oliver Tambo said “to go back means defeat”. We are therefore forging ahead with implementation.

The recent unprecedented hurricanes in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico, floods and droughts in Sierra Leone and Ethiopia and fires in California, remind us that the dangers posed by climate change are increasing exponentially, and that we cannot delay action any longer to some point in the future.

Furthermore, slow onset climate change will have severe impacts on Southern Africa, with shifting rainfall patterns, more frequent droughts and flooding causing devastating health, water, food and energy security impacts.

It is, however, important to stress that there should be no securitization of the climate change and environmental agendas. Empirical evidence on the causal factors of irregular migration and terrorism point towards insecurity, instability, poverty and lack of opportunities as the main push factors and the search for a better life for all as a pull factor,

rather than climate change and environmental degradation. Terrorism and migration therefore need to be discussed within the appropriate multilateral bodies.

The impacts of climate change will adversely affect the poorest South Africans the most. Therefore, we are investing heavily in taking adaptation action. Now is the time to act for the greater global good and future of generations.

All countries have to transition to an inclusive and just low-carbon and climate resilient development pathway. The faster we transition, the less damage will result at lower cost, and with maximum benefits.

Mr President,

I must stress that our global transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient future, is bright and full of opportunity to finally achieve equitable, inclusive and just development. No-one should be left behind.

South Africa's pre-2020 actions and its post-2020 Nationally Determined Contribution are designed to make a fair contribution to the global effort to tackle climate change. For example, the accelerated roll out of renewable and clean energy plans, in partnership with the private sector is among the many climate actions we are implementing. This rollout is designed to coincide with the progressive reduction of coal based high-carbon emission infrastructure. To empower South Africa to further ramp up our levels of ambition in the context of a just and equitable transition, international cooperation enabling access to climate finance and technologies will be essential.

Mr President,

On the substantive issues being discussed here at COP 23 – we are disappointed that

there seems to be little appetite to accelerate pre-2020 action, as exemplified by the fact that the Doha Amendment has not yet come into force and means of implementation support to developing countries is declining. The ramping up of ambition in the pre-2020 period by all actors is a crucial signal to our people that we are serious about fulfilling our commitments.

We call on ALL developed countries to urgently implement their pre-2020 pledges and increase their ambition including the provision of additional, new and predictable support to developing countries.

We want to stress that the success of next year's Talanoa Facilitative Dialogue is essential towards raising ambition in the post-2020 period. It is also essential for developed countries to honour their pre-2020 commitments.

Mr President,

To put us on a path to success both now and after 2020, it is critical that our negotiation of those rules that are needed to operationalize the Paris Agreement, should progress in all aspects.

There are no small and big issues, all issues are equally important. It is only when we have a balance of ALL Party interests that will we achieve the Durban Platform objective of an instrument applicable to ALL.

In this regard, the CoP23 outcome should address the 3 areas: Firstly, the process through which we arrive at the negotiation text: Secondly, balance in terms of how the operational rules evolve: and; Thirdly, the Talanoa Facilitative Dialogue design must include consideration of all relevant interests.

Finally, Mr President,

South Africa stands ready to work with you as the first CoP President from a Small Island Developing State to ensure that we leave Bonn with an outcome that puts us on path to the successful conclusion of the pre-2020 Agenda and the adoption of the Paris Agreement Work Programme.