

OPENING SPEECH BY THE MEC MAPULA MOKABA-PHUKWANA AT THE CONFERENCE ON COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE HELD AT THE ANGLICAN CHRIST CHURCH, POLOKWANR ON 26 OCTOBER 2016

Director of Programme

In 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to address climate change. It is called a framework convention because it is seen as a starting point of addressing the problem of climate change. The Convention entered into force on 21 March 1994. The ultimate objective of the Convention is “to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system”.

Out of 196 countries in the world 194 are members of UNFCCC and they have all committed to:

- ✚ Gather and share information on greenhouse gas emissions, national policies and best practices;
- ✚ Launch national strategies for addressing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to expected impacts, including the provision of financial and technological support to developing countries; and
- ✚ Cooperate in preparing for adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

Since the UNFCCC entered into force, the parties have been meeting annually in Conferences of the Parties (COP) to assess progress in dealing with climate change. The COP is seen as the "supreme body" of the Convention. It serves as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, which also adopts decisions and resolutions on the implementation of its provisions.

The first meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol was held in Montreal, Canada in December 2005, in conjunction with the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 11). The Parties to the Kyoto Protocol also formally adopted the “rulebook” of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, the so-called ‘Marrakesh accords’, which sets the framework for implementation of the Protocol.

It is just unfortunate that only the United States of America and Afghanistan are still refusing to be members of this critical organization. Though, Parties to the Convention that are not Parties to the Protocol are able to participate in the CMP as observers, but without the right to take decisions.

To date, the President of COP 17/CMP 7 is Her Excellency Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, the South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation from Limpopo.

Honorable Moruti Mautji Pataki;
Mme Lydia Mogano;
Representatives for all Faith-Based Organizations;
Our Esteemed Traditional Leaders present;
Fellow Panelists;
Government and Non-Governmental Representatives;
Academics and Educators present;
Civil Societies in its entirety;
Representatives from the Media;
Distinguished Guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

First of all, I would like to thank **Ethical Foundation for Leadership Excellence** for hosting this very important conference. Your initiative is an indication of deep rooted patriotism and love for nature and humanity. It is love for the current and future generation to ensure that we use God's given natural resources wisely and we do not destroy it.

The theme, or rather the topic of our discussion today entitled '**Collaborative Leadership in the Face of Climate Change**' augers well with Mary Robinson of Climate Justice Statement that:

“We can show how multilateralism and respect for others is the way to solve shared problems. In a world where there is too much talk about building walls and not enough about building bridges, climate action can provide a shining beacon for how collaboration and respect work better [than] isolationism and aggression”

Understanding how the climate is changing is an extremely difficult process because of the complex interactions between humans, animals, land, oceans and the atmosphere. What is trickier is the uncertainties in trying to model and predict the outcome of these interactions, particularly at the local level. Hence the saying that the weather is always unpredictable and like the government, always in the wrong.

To understand this complexity we need to work together as Government, Non-Governmental, Civil Society, Religious bodies, Educators and Learners, Academics, Magoshi a rena le setshaba kamoka.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Broadly speaking, the South Africa's climate has experienced trends of increasing average annual temperatures and slight decreases in average annual rainfall from 1970 to 1990. However, significant variation, particularly in patterns of rainfall, exists across the country and across different seasons. For example, records point towards more rainfall over the southwest winter rainfall region and less rainfall over the north-east summer rainfall region.

South Africans notice an increasing trend in daily temperature extremes and the number of annual too 'hot' days and nights. 'One minute it's hot, the next minute it's raining and there is hail, and then it's hot again'.

The Fifth Assessment Report of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change confirms that each of the past three decades has been successively warmer than the preceding decades since 1850, even warmer than during the Industrial Revolution.

To understand these complex phenomenon we need to unite and work together. Our failures as leaders of today to work together and build bridges would bring devastating outcomes for us and the future generation. As long as we operate in silos in pursuance of individualism, wealth and greed, unemployment, poverty, crime and other social ills will remain with us to eternity.

Human influence on the ecological system is absolutely clear, and that the more climate system is disrupted, the more humanity risks severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts. This tells us that despite global action to limit greenhouse emissions, they have not been enough.

In the case of South Africa, the impacts of climate change need to be considered in relation to wider development pressures affecting the country. Challenges such as international economic shocks and stresses, high levels of poverty and inequality, population changes, effects of HIV and AIDS, management of scarce natural resources and rapid urbanisation will each interact with climate change.

The results of those interactions will affect how far the effects of climate change are transmitted to the future generation and households at the local level. With this in mind, an effective response to changing climate and development pressures requires efforts from all stakeholders as well as good coordination across multiple levels of governance, from household and community, through municipal and provincial, to national and international levels.

Along with other developing countries, Southern Africa is at the greatest risk because of low levels of development and that their climate change adaptation efforts are not on the scale of developed countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Climate change poses one of the most serious threats to our long-term sustainable development, economic growth and the quality of life of our people. These impacts threaten to severely undermine the developmental gains made by our own young democracy in the past twenty two years.

Climate change directly affects agricultural production. We have recently as a country realized the importance of agriculture as a catalyst towards poverty alleviation, job creation and food security. More emphasis and resource commitment is focused on agriculture as a solution towards a better life for all South Africans.

Some few months back in May this year, a study by the joint publication between ilifa Labantwana, the Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town and the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency, published in the South African Early Childhood Review that about 63% of young South African children live in poverty, which can affect their physical, cognitive and emotional development.

As a woman, the climate policy has not addressed the differing ways in which climate change affects men and women. Given existing gender inequalities and development gaps, climate change ultimately places a greater burden on women. Men and women are affected by climate change in different ways, because of the societal and cultural roles and responsibilities made on them by families and communities. For example, in many communities women are the primary food producers and providers of water and cooking fuel for their families, therefore they have greater responsibility for family and community welfare.

Understanding that climate change impacts on men and women differently, it is therefore necessary for South African leaders to ensure that we have gender sensitive climate policies that are informed by women and address the realities of women's needs. Women can and are leading on climate action but they need to be better represented in climate decision making at all levels.

It is common knowledge that the agricultural sector is inherently sensitive to climate conditions and is one of the most vulnerable sectors to the risks and impact of global climate change. The Limpopo Province is still experiencing severe drought which is aggravated by extreme high temperatures. There was no significant rainfall received by the province since the beginning of spring season. The provincial dam levels are very low and continue to reduce at an alarming rate. The average dam level for the Limpopo province is at 46, 9% this week as compared to 74, 3% around this time last year.

In line with the theme of this conference, as leaders in various organizations and corporate, we can show leadership on Climate Change through:-

- ✚ Adopting a science-based Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions reduction target.
- ✚ Put a price on carbon emission.
- ✚ Procure 100% of electricity from renewable sources.
- ✚ Engage responsibly in climate policy.
- ✚ Disclose climate friendliness of portfolios and manage carbon asset risk.
- ✚ Remove commodity-driven deforestation from all supply chains by 2020.
- ✚ Map and assess your company's water risks in a changing climate.

In conclusion, I am confident that participants in this all important discussion would touch on multilateral resolutions from COP3 to COP 17/CMP 7. I am further convinced that our panelists will engage on the principles contained in the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**.

Together we can build the biggest mitigation buffer against climate change.

I thank you