

## **SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH STATEMENT TO COP25**

We, the youth of South Africa, emphasise the urgent need for climate action in order to build a climate resilient South Africa. We applaud and support the strides made by the South African Government with regards to climate change, including the introduction of the Carbon Tax and the work being done to ensure that the Climate Change Bill is passed.

The youth stress the need to act on climate change prior to the 2020 implementation of the Paris Agreement. Considering the upcoming UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP25), and aware of the pivotal role the South African government has within the international forum; we would like to put forward the following recommendations:

### **Climate Action:**

Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), Paris Agreement (PA), and the outcomes of the UN Climate Action Summit, we implore governments to declare climate change as a global crisis. For the sake of future generations, we urge governments to enhance ambition and commitments made towards climate action.

### **Stakeholder Participation:**

We applaud the South African government on their recent strides in increasing youth participation in international Climate Change meetings by adopting a youth delegate to attend COP Conferences. Whilst this is a step in the right direction, we call for an increase in the number of youth delegates to strengthen the voice of the youth from vulnerable countries at international decision-making tables. We, furthermore, stress the need for a shift in selection process of the official South African Youth Delegate. We suggest the creation of a panel, consisting of volunteers from of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and leaders in academia for the reviewing process of potential youth applicants, as to allow for a more transparent and inclusive selection process. Furthermore, whilst this inclusion is critical for climate change negotiations, it must be recognised that simply allowing for young people to attend such meetings is insufficient. This needs to be paired with training and exposure to the climate change discourse and negotiation processes. As such, we recommend the implementation of clear and decisive policies and collaborations with different youth-based entities, to train selected young people and put forward clear expectations that government has for these youth delegates.

We recognise the need for policies to be simplified and readily accessible for ordinary citizens to easily understand and effectively engage on. In the spirit of the Talanoa Dialogue, we stress the need to include more voices from the marginalised and most vulnerable groups such as women and youth in policy making, considering the clash between National Climate Change Stakeholder meetings and the South African school calendar, and the location of the stakeholder meetings which disadvantage community leaders from rural communities.

## **Capacity Building**

Guided by Articles 11 and 12 of the Paris Agreement, we call for the inclusion of youth-friendly, accessible mechanisms to create awareness and educate the members of society on the adverse effects of climate change and capacitate them to create solutions to this global crisis. We urge the government to embrace youth-led, youth-focussed initiatives that allow for existence of voices from the Global South, internationally, where they seem to lack.

We further call for the translation and simplification of the PA into all parties' official languages to ensure that they may be understood by all members of the community. We also advocate for more interactive and inclusive training trans-nationally on adaptation and mitigation strategies. Additionally, we call for greater diverse representation in policy and decision-making platforms. The importance of women and youth participation in these activities cannot be ignored.

### **Finance:**

Climate finance is a crucial element of the PA. The success of the PA is heavily reliant on this element. The modalities of climate finance must be those which bind to follow the guidelines for reporting on climate finance under article 9.7 of the Paris Agreement. We need South Africa to have a strong position on this case as this will determine the envisioned success of the PA.

Climate finance aids the needs identified in the national climate plans including the NDCs. As a developing country who suffers the severe effects of climate change, we urge that global funds, such as the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation fund and other funds that aim to serve the PA, be made more accessible to developing countries who are in dire need of the resources. It is important for parties to reflect on domestic circumstances and remember that these funds should be provided to stakeholders working to address the effects of climate change at grassroot level, including providing provisions for capacity building funding and exploring renewable resources as a source of powering the national grid, amongst many others.

We applaud South Africa for introducing a national carbon tax and appeal to the Government to continue advocating for the common practice of carbon tax internationally in order to hold multinational companies accountable for their unsustainable practices.

### **Adaptation:**

We commend the South African government who, through the aid of the GCF, has managed to start projects that have assisted South Africa to adapt to the effects of climate change, bearing in mind that adaptation and mitigation work hand in hand. We, however, believe that the South African government needs to further study the effects of climate change on the most vulnerable minority groups, such as disabled people and indigenous people, and how best we can assist them to adapt to climate change. We appeal to the South African delegation to advocate for safe and viable solutions for minority groups to adapt to climate change at an international level.

We urge parties to liaise effectively on issues pertaining to climate change migration and environmental refugees in order to prevent climate conflicts. Additionally, we call upon the private sector to acknowledge their contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and adhere to the regulations outlined in policy documents such as the Paris Agreement, NDCs and NAPs.

## Mitigation:

We draw attention to the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C and emphasise the urgent need for climate action now in order to avoid the catastrophic impacts thereof. This will require parties to scale up their NDC's and provide ambitious targets to limit their GHG emissions. We urge South Africa to transition to a greener future to become a net-zero carbon emitter and to incorporate a circular economy approach to create a sustainable society overall.

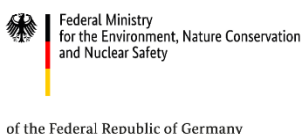
## Technology:

We acknowledge the role of the STEM fields in the development of technologies that mitigate the effects of climate change. We encourage parties to prioritise the building of capacity within society in order to advance climate-mitigating technologies. We applaud South Africa for their retrofitting of flue gas desulphurisation and carbon capture and storage in Kusile. However, we appeal to government to explore more renewable energy sources as a means of meeting the goals set out in the PA.

*This statement was created by youth participants of the 2019 EU Climate Diplomacy week at the South African Institute of International Affairs from 30 September to 4 October 2019. The statement was presented at the National Climate Change Stakeholder Dialogue to Minister Barbara Creecy of the Department of Forestry and Fisheries and Environmental Affairs of the Republic of South Africa on 4 October 2019 in Johannesburg. The statement was also presented at the closing ceremony of the EU Climate Diplomacy Week at the South African Institute of International Affairs on 4 October 2019.*



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