



REMARKS BY MR. SINDISO NGWENYA, COMESA SECRETARY-GENERAL AT THE LAUNCH OF THE AFRICA CLIMATE SOLUTION, AT THE POZNAN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE COP14, DECEMBER 10 2008.

ALL PROTOCOL OBSERVED

Evidence of climate change is all around us, even the sworn doubters are no longer in doubt that unless humanity acts to mitigate and adapt, we have no future to talk about. Africa is at the hot spot of climate change that the Secretariats for the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have developed a comprehensive approach and a joint initiative to address climate change: the African Climate Solution.

Africa's window to adaptation and mitigation is closing each day we delay to act on a comprehensive and inclusive solution to climate change. The African Climate Solution is an all embracing approach which we present to the world at Poznan today. There has not been a more opportune time to launch this initiative than at COP14. Speaking on behalf of Africa and its people, it is our fervent hope that we are laying the foundation for a fruitful outcome at Copenhagen 2009 which will benefit Africa's biocarbon.

The African Climate Solution is not about if and when Africa, will participate in concrete efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, but that Africa wishes to be, should be and will be part and parcel of the post-Kyoto Protocol regime. Africa can do it and with the support of the international community, we will do it.

The Initiative we are launching here today stems from the recognition of the seriousness of the challenge posed by climate change, which was re-iterated by the African Heads of State and Government at the African Union Summit in January 2007. The Heads of State and Government called on all stakeholders - including governments, private sector actors, and civil society - to actively address climate change. These leaders highlighted the need to mainstream climate adaptation and mitigation into poverty reduction strategies and economic development plans.

Under the leadership of AMCEN, African Climate Solution will make substantive inputs into the preparations towards a common African position, leading to negotiations in Copenhagen during COP 15 of the UNFCCC. In addition, to promoting the REDD agenda, the African Climate Solution seeks to promote sustainable agriculture and land-use practices, biodiversity conservation, maintenance of environmental services, successful adaptation to climate change. A REDD – AFOLU coalition presents an all inclusive integrated approach that will ensure improvements in rural livelihoods, in addition to the delivery of cost-effective and verifiable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. The REDD and AFOLU agenda are inter-dependent and fundamentally inseparable.

Last month, COMESA ministers of Agriculture and Environment meeting in Kenya, came up with the Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change which calls for the engagement of regional and international organizations in developing methodologies for measuring and monitoring carbon sequestration in agricultural and agroforestry systems. In addition, the Declaration urges the international community to provide additional resources to African countries to build capacity to participate in bio-carbon markets and thus lay the foundation for successful adaptation and mitigation to climate change.

Ladies and gentlemen, the African Union (AU), New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), COMESA, EAC and SADC are committed to active participation in negotiations on future commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the post Kyoto Protocol (i.e. post2012) climate regime. In response, the three cooperating Regional Economic Communities (RECs), in collaboration with the AU and NEPAD, established a Working Group of 26 African Countries for Agriculture, Forests, Land-use and Livelihoods.

For Africa, the phrase united we stand, divided we fall has never rung true than today. Africa needs a united voice in claiming its place in the post-Kyoto regime and to this end COMESA, in conjunction with SADC and EAC, mandated FANRPAN to mobilise African civil society organisations (CSOs) under the Africa-wide Civil Society Climate Change Initiative for Policy Dialogues (ACCID). The inaugural ACCID regional workshop was held on 26 – 27 November 2008, at the Farm Inn, Pretoria, South Africa and brought together 21 representatives from 14 selected civil society organizations. The workshop endorsed the call for mainstreaming of climate change concepts and principles into national development and sectoral policies and programmes.

A result of a series of consultations, reviews and analytical work within the COMESA/SADC/EAC sub-regions, African Climate Solution, which is aimed at the promotion of sustainable agriculture and land-use practices, biodiversity conservation, maintenance of environmental services, successful adaptation to climate change, and improvements in rural livelihoods, in addition to the delivery of cost-effective and verifiable reductions in greenhouse

gas emissions. This is commonly referred to as AFOLU, being agriculture, forestry, and land use. This programme complements the REDD initiative, and advocates for a REDD – AFOLU coalition as Africa’s coordinated response to climate mitigation and adaptation leading to improved livelihoods of rural communities.

A leading supporter and partner in this initiative, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) recently hosted a climate change consultative meeting in Washington D.C. which was attended by the Permanent secretaries of the COMESA region as well as international partners. The meeting set the agenda for Africa’s inclusion in the post-Kyoto scenario.

Ladies and gentlemen, the time for act is now. The time for Africa is now. The Africa Climate Solution needs your support. I would like to pay tribute to partners already on board. I would like to list them:

- The International Emissions Trading Authority, who have facilitated arrangements for this side event
- The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)
- Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)
- World AgroForestry Centre (ICRAF)
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
- International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
- Michigan State University (MSU)
- African Development Bank (AfDB)’s Africa Carbon Finance Mechanism
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Norwegian Government
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

I would also like to make a special mention of ACCID which you will be hearing more about because it is part and parcel of the Initiative.

May I take advantage of this launch to call upon your support. As you leave this room, I kindly request you drop your business cards for us to include you in our database so that we keep you updated on our initiative. Africa's climate solution is pro-REDD and Africa's climate solution is proAFOLU. We cannot fail. Africa will succeed. With your support, YES we CAN!

I thank you.