

Remarks by honourable deputy minister of environmental affairs and tourism of South Africa, Ms Rejoice Mabudafhasi

Occasion: Panel discussion on financing for climate change and women, which took place in Monaco on 21. February 2008

**Program Director
Your Excellencies
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen**

1. Introduction

Women are hit hardest by climate change because they have fewer means to adapt and prepare for extreme weather conditions made worse by climate change.

One of the primary reasons that women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change is that they are disproportionately dependent on threatened natural resources.

Women are responsible for approximately 75 percent of household food production in sub-Saharan Africa, 65 percent in Asia, and 45 percent in Latin America.

When poor women lose their livelihoods, they slip deeper into poverty, which in turn worsens their inequality and marginalisation. As crop yields decline and resources become scarcer, women's workloads will expand, jeopardizing their chances to work outside the home or attend school. In times of drought, they will also have to spend more time performing another added responsibility – carrying, purifying, and supplying the family's water.

Gender issues have not been sufficiently considered in wider climate change discourses and initiatives. The international response to this environmental challenge has largely focused on mitigation with minimal attention to adaptation strategies that would assist women and children in vulnerable communities to adapt to climate change.

It is in this context that we strongly advocate for the UNFCCC to carefully plan the future of the climate change regime taking into consideration proactive gender equality and sustainability guidelines for funding.

2. Gender equality and financing for climate change

The Global Network of Women Ministers and Leaders of the Environment calls upon governments, international agencies and all stakeholders to ensure gender equity in all phases and aspects of funding: when designing, implementing, evaluating proposals, and reporting on programmes.

All parties and stakeholders should commit themselves to ensuring that climate change as well as mitigation and adaptation efforts shall not exacerbate the injustice, inequities and inequalities between women and men. This calls for the application of gender budgeting and gender audits in all funds.

Investments in programmes for adaptation, mitigation, technology transfer and capacity building should also be measured by their contribution to social and gender justice.

We have a duty to involve women and gender experts in the development of funding criteria and programmes as well as in decisions about funding.

This should be coupled with the development of gender sensitive indicators based on criteria aimed at measuring progress on gender equality and equity with respect to financing for climate change.

3. Reflections on current finds under the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol

It is our firm view that any funding under the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol must pursue strict environmental sustainability requirements whilst substantively and genuinely contributing to the reduction of poverty and gender inequalities.

The “polluter pays” and the “sufferer receives” principles should serve as a basis for all funding mechanisms.

In this regard, adaptation must be defined as an integral concept targeting the causes of vulnerability of social groups, and in particular of women.

Allow me to reflect on gender aspects of the following three key international funds for adaptation that operate under the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol.

- The Least Developed Country Fund is financing the development and implementation of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) in developing countries. While gender equality formed one of the guiding elements for NAPA development, it has not resulted in explicit targeting of women in adaptation projects.
- The Special Climate Change Fund prioritises finance of adaptation projects in developing countries. However, to date, guidelines for allocation funds and implementation of projects do not sufficiently include gender and human rights perspectives.
- The Adaptation Fund is financed by emissions trading under the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. Although not yet operational, there is a clear need for including gender and poverty as central components of guidelines for this fund.

While this responsibility rests with all negotiators, recipient developing countries will be responsible for ensuring gender sensitive approaches through a countrydriven approach in order that women benefit from activities financed under this fund.

In conclusion, we call for the prioritization of adaptation and mitigation needs of women on the basis of their disproportionate vulnerability. This should be done through ensuring gender justice in design and implementation of adaptation and mitigation programs. We need increased participation and active involvement of

women in international negotiations as well as national adaptation and mitigation programmes.

If we take into serious consideration the issue of gender justice in climate change negotiations, funding and policies, we will be able to shift from technical and economic solutions to integrated approaches which give priority to people and their livelihoods.

Thank you