

Position Paper by the General Assembly (Plenary) Delegate of the Republic of Namibia

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"We have a chance to put in place a climate change agreement that all nations can embrace, which will be equitable, balanced, comprehensible."- Ban Ki Moon

With the effects of climate change already being felt and with increased environmental changes expected within two decades of the full implementation of the Kyoto Protocol, we as a world community need to act together to reach a consensus for a plan to continue the mitigation of climate change after the expiry of the Kyoto Protocol so as to ensure a bright future for the human race and our planet, Mother Earth.

Namibia, situated in sub-Saharan, southern Africa, with a population of 1.8 million is one of the second most sparsely populated countries in the world after Mongolia. The arid environment, recurrent drought and desertification contribute to make Namibia one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change.

The issue of climate change is of grave concern for Namibia as it stands to lose a lot from the effects of climate change. More than 30% of Namibia's GDP relies on natural resources that rely on the environment, i.e. agriculture, fishing, tourism and mining. Climate change may see over a quarter of Namibia's population looking for new occupations. Namibia's contribution to climate change has been minimal, it contributes about 0.05% of total greenhouse gases and is essentially a nil carbon country due to the absorption of emissions by its forests.

Namibia's ability to adapt to climate change is highly inhibited due to its economic status as a developing nation. With a 30% unemployment rate and with a large majority of its population living under extreme poverty, earning about only 1 to 2 USD per day and a Ginni coefficient for inequality of 0.71%, it cannot give up its development due to climate constraints. With more than 50% of the population into agriculture, which is largely dominated by subsistence agriculture, the consequences of lower rainfall, desertification, temperature rise and higher surface evaporation, agricultural production will decrease by 50-70% by 2012. This will lead to higher unemployment, poverty and food insecurity for a nation that already imports large quantities of foodgrains. Other effects of climate change are vegetation pattern changes, increased bush land encroachment, biodiversity loss, water scarcity due to increased surface evaporation, desertification, increased risk to natural calamities and increased health problems due to the spread of malaria, HIV and other life threatening diseases due to temperature increase. The Namibian marine ecosystems, currently one of the best in the world, may face eradication and tourism, a major GDP source, may be hit hard.

Namibia's current status on climate change is that as a developing nation there should be no binding emission reduction targets that would affect any developing nation's economic and social progress. The transfer of technology and funds to extremely vulnerable nations such as Namibia should be a priority issue for the convention. Namibia, along with Africa and other developing nations, is a part of the Group of 77 nations which includes China and India, two developing economic powerhouses. The group has developed a common negotiating position within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Namibia has done considerable work to mitigate climate change. It ratified the Kyoto Protocol in 1993 and established the Namibia Climate Change Committee in 2001. Since then Namibia has been constantly working to mitigate climate change both domestically and internationally. Internationally Namibia has been an active member of the UNFCCC and has been successful in achieving the goals set for it in the Kyoto Protocol.

From the Copenhagen treaty Namibia would like to see:

1. Concrete and stringent measures for Global greenhouse gas emissions
2. That Namibia's economic and social growth is not hindered by any emission reduction targets.
3. The transfer of technology and funds to vulnerable nations like itself for mitigation of climate change.
4. Technically advanced nations help it deal with the economic problems created by climate change in Namibia.

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