



**Ministerial Statement on COP21**

by

**Honourable Pohamba Shifeta**

**Minister of Environment and Tourism, MP**

Parliament, Windhoek

Right honorable Prime Minister

Honorable Speaker

Honorable Members of Parliament

I would like to take this opportunity to inform this August house on the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of Parties COP21 on climate change. The twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) and the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP) will take place from 30 November to 11 December 2015, in Paris, France.

Honorable speaker

Climate change stands high on global political and economic agenda the world over. Climate change can no longer be regarded as an environmental challenge but indeed a developmental constraint. This phenomena is capable to undo all our economic gains we have made so far. Events such as floods and droughts causes devastating negative impacts such as loss of life, loss of livelihoods, destruction of infrastructure and so on. Recent studies indicated that Namibia can experience annual losses of about 6% of our GDP from our agricultural, fisheries and tourism sectors. Thus as a country we take climate change concerns serious and we have put in place policies and strategies to deal with climate change. We are ready to capture all the climate change related investment opportunities in order to implement our adaptation and mitigation activities.

Allow me to remind this house that the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC is to stabilize the greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system that can destroy our ecosystems and threaten food production. I strongly believe that our ministry is strategically positioned to make a significant contribution toward our national economic growth and development particularly in the area of poverty eradication. To date my ministry is actively engaging the key stakeholders to develop bigger sized climate change programs in order to address issues such as food and water security, renewable energy, clean transportation technologies, and enhancement of community

based livelihoods activities. All these efforts are carried out in the context of poverty eradication, wealth creation and economic prosperity of our country.

Honorable speaker

Let me turn to the substantive issues under COP 21. It is worth noting that the Negotiations under the UNFCCC have started 20 years ago and they have been going into cycles of no significant progress. Unlike other previous COPs, COP21 is considered special because it is expected to make a landmark history in the UNFCCC process. The COP21 is expected to come up with the new legally binding global climate change agreement /treaty which require all Parties to the UNFCCC to take commitments or comparable efforts to reduce the Greenhouse Gas emissions in order to stabilise the global warming. This treaty will replace the Kyoto Protocol which ends on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. The new treaty will enter into force from the 1 January 2021

It is worth noting that the COP21 negotiations are centered on two major goals agreed at COP16 in 2010. The first goal is to limit the global average temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius. The second goal was to establish the Green Climate Fund and capitalise it with US\$ 100 billion per annum by 2020 and keep capitalising it annually from 2021 with the same amount or more.

At the COP19 held in 2013, Parties to the Convention decided to prepare for their Intended Nationally-Determined Contributions (INDCs) to the COP21 agreement. *So far, about 150 countries including all the major polluters have submitted their INDC. The UNFCCC has compiled all the INDC and the conclusions that emanates from this compilation show that the world is still on wrong path to address global warming. The aggregated INDCs put the global temperature trajectory at 3 Degrees Celsius against the decided and agreed temperature goal of 2 degrees Celsius.*

*Namibia has prepared and submitted its INDC as approved by the Cabinet in October.*

Honorable Speaker

1. Let me highlight briefly on the expectation of COP21. The COP21 the agreement is expected to be balanced with all the building blocks of the climate change such as

adaptation including the issues of loss and damage, mitigation including the matters pertaining forest management, finance, technology transfer, capacity building, transparency mechanism and/or timeframes.

2. **Legal form:** the new legally bidding protocol, accord or treaty to be signed in Paris in order to come into force by 2021.
3. **Mitigation:** We expect developed countries to increase their level of ambition on emission reduction targets in order to stay within the 2 degrees Celsius temperature goal.
4. **Finance:** It is expected that developed countries will lay down a clear pathway on how they will be mobilizing the minimum of US\$ 100 billion up to 2020 and beyond. We expect that the funds in the Green climate fund will be split equally between adaptation and mitigation activities.
5. **Adaption:** adaptation is key for all the developing countries particularly the small island developing states, least developed countries and Africa. We stressed the need to link adaption needs to the level of mitigation because the lesser the mitigation efforts the more climate change impacts will be felt, hence the need for the periodic review to determine the adequacy of funding for adaptation activities.
6. **Technology transfer:** the COP is expected to adopt a mechanism which promotes an enhanced action to pave for faster transfer of appropriate and environmentally friendlier technologies from developed to developing countries.
7. **Capacity Building:** the COP would consider establishing a permanent institution to deal with capacity building initiatives that are linked to the technological transfer, knowledge management or the improvement on the school or tertiary academic curriculums.
8. **Transparency:** the COP will adopt a mechanism for Monitoring Reporting and Verifying (MRV) the actions that countries are undertaking in order to ensure that what is reported as actions are in conformity with the international standards particularly the methodological or scientific approach on emission reduction, provision of finance, technology transfer or capacity building. This system would prevent countries to cheat in their reporting systems or modalities.
9. **Timeframes:** the COP is also expected to work out the modalities on how to implement the new agreement. The COP would agree on the periodicity of reviewing the implementation of the existing and the new agreements.



10. **Overall:** It is expected that the agreement will be fully under the UNFCCC. The differentiation of efforts between developed and developing countries have to be maintained. It is expected that this agreement will be further worked on from the year 2016 – 2020 so that it will be ready to enter into force in the year 2021.
11. **Dilemma:** The main issue remains that the aggregate commitments showed on INDCs are not adequate to limit the global average temperature below 2 degrees Celsius. The question is what then? We believe this will be left in the hands of the French government, as COP21 Presidency, do to their homework on international diplomacy and convince the developed countries and other countries willing to do so, to raise their level of mitigation ambition.

In conclusion, Honorable Speaker

The main friction in the negotiations has been the disagreement between developed countries and the major emerging developing countries. Developed countries argue that their emission reduction alone will not be helpful to halt global warming while the emissions from major developing countries continue to rise at the alarming levels even sometimes equivalent to that of developed countries. However the emerging major developing countries, in line with the provisions of the UNFCCC, are arguing that the developed countries have reached their level of development though high emission trajectory and thus have the historical responsibility for causing global warming. The emerging economies feel that they did not exceed their atmospheric limit yet and that they have the full rights to develop through high emission paths like others did and they can only divert from the business as usual if they are provided with the additional financial resources (the difference between the cost of business as usual and the intervention scenario). This leads the negotiations into deadlocks. And this is the negotiation conundrum we always find ourselves in time and again but we believe that with a strong politically will from all Parties, Paris will be a big success.

I thank you!

