

Memo 13/11

COP17 – Objectives and procedures

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Announcement

Our Cabinet Minister who will preside over the COP17 discussions issued a notice that was published in *The Star* on 11 October. I have attached a copy. It makes very interesting reading. This is my interpretation.

South Africa is in a very difficult position. We were one of the BASIC nations (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) acting on behalf of the developing nations who ensured that no economically damaging, legally binding agreement was reached at Copenhagen two years ago.

Obviously, South Africa has to adopt a neutral role in Durban. This is clear in the notice.

The negotiations in Durban will be a party-driven process with South Africa playing an enabling role for parties to find agreement on issues of climate change. We will seek to facilitate an outcome which is fair, transparent, inclusive, and upholds the convention's principle of common, but differentiated, responsibilities and capabilities. (My emphasis.)

And later that equal weight must be given to mitigation (prevention) and adaptation measures.

These objectives sound the death knell of the efforts by the developed nations to force all countries to accept specified and enforceable emissions control measures, with minimum reference to the adaptation alternatives.

As so often happens in life, an altogether unexpected issue has reinforced our view that climate change science is no more than an unverified hypothesis that is now falling apart.

Disappearance of global warming

An interesting comment in the Minister's notice is that South Africa has just experienced some of the coldest winters on record. Coincidentally, Europe has just experienced three successive abnormally cold winters the last being the coldest since the commencement of records in 1910.

The 10 October 2011 issue of CCnet was headed *Europe may be facing return of Little Ice Age*. It makes very interesting reading. It quoted media reports on the UK Met Office's

warning of another unusually cold winter based on the linkage between solar ultraviolet radiation variability and regional winter climate. There were several extracts from media reports suggesting that Europe could be facing the return of the Little Ice Age that gripped Britain 300 years ago causing decades of bitter winters.

Warning by UK Met Office

The Met Office's warning can be found at <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/news/solar-variability>. The title is *Solar variability helps explain cold winters*. The introductory paragraph reads:

Research from the Met Office has shed new light on a link between decadal solar variability and winter climate in the UK, Northern Europe and parts of America.

This is a huge relief for those of us who have been studying the solar linkage for more than the past 30 years. My first detailed report on the linkage was published by the South African Department of Water Affairs in 1978. It was titled *Long-range prediction of river flow – a preliminary assessment*. Now, 33 years later the UK climate change scientists have at last realised that solar variability influences global climate.

The Met office obviously appreciated the effect that global cooling and the solar linkage has on the whole climate change fiasco. It therefore concluded the warning by quoting the scientist from Imperial College, London who undertook the studies:

Compared with the effect of man-made emissions over the past century, solar variations still have a very minor effect on long-term global climate.

This is obviously a politically motivated statement for which there is no scientifically believable evidence. The very opposite is true.

The papers on the subject are available on the *Nature Geoscience* website at the cost of US\$18 each. They are titled:

Solar forcing in winter climate variability in the northern hemisphere, and

Atmospheric science: Solar cycle and climate predictions.

Our far more comprehensive paper on this subject was published in the Journal of the South African Institution of Civil Engineering, Vol 49 Nr 2, June 2007: *Linkages between solar activity, climate predictability and water resource development*, Alexander(SA), Bailey(UK), Bredenkamp(SA), van der Merwe(SA) and Willemsse (Ireland).

David Livingstone

I apologise in advance for the following comments. Many years ago the London Missionary Society despatched David Livingstone to Africa to convert local populations to Christianity. His geographical discoveries are well documented.

Now the climate change scientists in the UK and their institutions are scientific heathens that badly need enlightenment. I exposed their rituals in my Mission Impossible memo. Will they be converted ahead of COP17?

Why is it so difficult for the Met Office and other institutions to understand that it is **variations in the receipt and redistribution of solar energy, not temperature** that drive multiyear variations in the Earth's climate? Also, it is the double sunspot cycle that is relevant not the single 11-year cycle. Do they not understand that the alternating solar cycles have different characteristics?

The Met Office's warning is questioned elsewhere in the CCnet excerpts. This is on the basis that nobody really understands the basic feedbacks and climate dynamics that drive annual winter availability, let alone years in advance.

As discussed in my previous memo, we have indeed developed a successful multi-year prediction method. It has nothing to do with the physical processes. Details are to be found in my article *Likelihood of a global drought in 2009 to 2016* published in the South African magazine *Civil Engineering* in June 2008. The present, unstable global conditions can be expected to continue through to 2016.

As an outsider I find it very sad and disturbing that the highly respected UK Met Office should be so ignorant of the well documented studies of long-term climate-related prediction methods based on stochastic time series analyses. This is essential for its function in making long-term predictions. Instead of studying the historical data and then seeking the causes of the anomalies, it attempts to study the theory in the first instance despite the wealth of available data. It is putting the cart before the horse!

Furthermore, there are frequent references to the El Nino/La Nina phenomena driving global climate variability in the articles quoted in CCnet. This is pure nonsense. Our analyses demonstrate that these phenomena occur **concurrently** with climatic changes. They do not cause them. Why have climate change scientists not been able to determine the causes of these phenomena?

Collective knowledge

There was a time not so long ago when the only authoritative source of information on climate change science was in refereed papers in recognised scientific journals. The grey literature (mainly technical reports) was considered to be inferior. The Internet did not exist.

Now the situation has reversed. The Internet is alive with contrarian views. Formal, published papers only constitute a small sample of our collective knowledge.

Confident in run-up to climate talks

MAITE NKOANA-MASHABANE

THE SUCCESSFUL delivery of the 17th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Durban from November 28 to December 9 is one of the key issues that is at the centre of our government's key deliverables for 2011/12.

This is, in part, influenced by our hosting of the climate talks in the magnificent city of Durban, but also by the centrality that climate change has acquired as an urgent and immediate threat to our way of life as we know it.

We have all witnessed the acute changes in weather patterns all over the globe.

Internationally, we have witnessed devastating floods in Pakistan, and the devastating power of the tsunami in Japan.

Here in Africa, we have all seen the helplessness of humanity when confronted by nature's destructive power as evidenced in Somalia, where our government, in partnership with the Gift of the Givers, continues to play an instrumental role in alleviating the challenges facing that country. We have also seen the changing weather patterns affecting Nigeria and Benin, where floods have wreaked havoc.

Here at home, we have experienced some of the coldest winters on record throughout the country, including changing rainfall patterns in the Eastern Cape.

These climatic challenges certainly have an impact on our way of life and on our ability to feed our societies.

As the incoming Conference of the Parties (COP) president, my role is to lead the world in forging a common consensus in terms of reversing these adverse effects of climate change.

By hosting these talks, South

Africa hopes to uphold rules-based multilateralism as one of our fundamental interests which we aspire to globally. Accordingly, South Africa will endeavour to uphold the consensus nature of decision-making that has characterised the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Conference(s) of the Parties, since 1995.

In this regard, South Africa, in cooperation with the parties to the UNFCCC, will seek to facilitate an outcome which is fair, transparent, inclusive and upholds the convention's principle of common, but differentiated, responsibilities and capabilities.

The negotiations in Durban will be a party-driven process, with South Africa playing an enabling role for parties to find agreement on issues of climate change.

South Africa will not seek to impose a solution of its own, as the UNFCCC is governed by its own processes and rules of procedure, which we think are important to observe, since this strengthens multilateralism and the legitimacy of the process.

It is important to note that one of our critical immediate responsibilities is to ensure that the trust that was restored in Cancun does not suffer a second disconnect among parties, as evidenced in the Copenhagen negotiations.

As the parties prepare to meet in Durban, there is an urgent need for all to approach the Durban negotiations with an element of maturity as the outcomes of the Cancun negotiations, although laudable, unfortunately did not address all the issues.

To generate the requisite momen-

tum towards an acceptable outcome in Durban, in my capacity as the incoming COP president, I have since the beginning of this year begun high-level consultations with stakeholders, both locally and internationally, including at recent meetings of the ad hoc working group(s) in Panama City, Panama.

We continue to welcome to our shores various climate change envoys from all over the world, who visit our country to share their views and possible outcomes of the climate talks.

I was heartened by the attitude of the parties and various climate change groupings in Panama. They have indicated in unequivocal terms their overarching interest of making Durban a success.

As we approach the talks, I am confident that we will be able to deliver a fair, credible, and balanced outcome, which is the overall interest of all parties.

Local government structures, in particular eThekweni, have proved to be worthy partners in our hosting of the climate talks.

The host city has worked hand in hand with our logistical team and has been instrumental in terms of pioneering some of the projects that seek to minimise the carbon footprint of the COP, the greening projects within the city, and the creation and mobilisation of communities on issues of climate change.

However, it is my strong view that the reduction of the carbon footprint, the implementation of greening projects and the creation and mobilisation of communities on issues of climate change should not be limited to Durban, but should concern all of us.

There is a compelling need for all of

us to harness the knowledge garnered in our hosting of these climate change talks and share it with our communities.

Most importantly, we need to impress on all our communities the threat climate change poses to our world and articulate the need to adapt and mitigate the ill-effects of climate change in our country.

The success of Durban will be measured in terms of the following:

- That there is consensus on the position that the Cancun agreements must be operationalised, including the establishment of the key mechanisms and institutional arrangements agreed to in Cancun.

Here the Green Climate Fund represents the centrepiece of a broader set of outcomes for Durban. Developing countries demand a prompt start for the fund through its early and initial capitalisation.

- For Durban to be successful, we have to do more than making the Cancun agreements operational. We have no option but to deal with the outstanding political issues remaining from the Bali road map. This means finding a resolution to the issue of the second commitment period under the Kyoto protocol and agreeing on the legal nature of a future climate change system.

- Adaptation is an essential element of the outcome in Durban because it is a key priority for many developing countries, particularly small island developing states, least developed countries and Africa.

The current fragmented approach to adaptation must be addressed in a more coherent manner and it must give equal priority to adaptation and mitigation.

● *The is an edited version of Minister Mkoaana-Mashabane's speech at the SA Mayors' Conference on Climate Change in Preparation for the talks.*



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