

**MINISTER MOLEWA SPEAKING NOTE IN THE EVENT OF: AU SIDE EVENT ON
EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON WOMEN AND PREPARATIONS FOR
COP17/CMP7**

Colleagues,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen

It is an honour and privilege to welcome you to this side event on the effects of climate change on women, in a year when Africa is hosting the Conference of Parties on climate change in Durban. It is an opportune time to have such discussions and exchange views on this topic, as climate change disproportionately unfairly affects the vulnerable segments of the world and our population.

Ladies and gentlemen, scientists tells us that climate change will result in a higher incidence of droughts, floods and extreme weather events which lead to damage in property, loss of livelihoods and lives, particularly in Africa. Climate change is expected to lead to a higher burden on our health systems due to diseases such as malaria and waterborne diseases. Poor nutrition from crop failure and starvation further make climate change one of the biggest challenges we face in the 21st century.

Ladies and gentlemen, next year as we move towards Rio+20, the world has to re-examine how we have progressed towards achieving Millennium Development

Goals. It is a fact that as developing countries we have not achieved as much as we would have liked, and climate change potentially will undermine our efforts towards poverty eradication, job creation and a decent life for our people.

Ladies and gentlemen, the paradox of climate change is that its effects are most devastating on the people with the least responsibility for causing it. It is industrialisation of process of developed countries that has contributed the most to the effects we experience today. However, it is developing countries, which due to their socio-economic development status suffer the most as they don't have the capacity and resilience to respond to shocks, such as a drought in the Horn of Africa or floods in Southern Africa.

When these devastating events take place, it is the vulnerable segment of our societies that bear the brunt. Recognising that 70% of women in the world live below the poverty line, they therefore are the most vulnerable segment of our community along with children and the elderly. This means they have limited means to reconstruct their lives after such events. Failed agricultural crops, damaged water and sanitation infrastructure, and debilitation from disease, further places a burden on women to provide for themselves and their families.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is our responsibility to highlight the vulnerability of women, and ensure that there is concrete recognition and prioritisation of gender issues in response to climate change. It is our responsibility that in the negotiation of a global agreement on climate change, adaptation is at the center of the

agreement, and that within the Adaptation Framework there is a mechanism for concrete implementation of adaptation actions on all adaptation sectors, such as water, agriculture, health, biodiversity, and also that consideration of gender issues is centralized in the Framework.

Ladies and gentlemen, I must however stress that the vulnerability of women is one side of the coin; the other side is that women can play a significant role in the reduction of emissions and our mitigation actions. Technology development and transfer, as well as capacity building should specifically target women, through increasing the share of jobs in our green economy initiatives. Women are in a unique position to take the lead in tackling development and climate challenges, and IT IS TIME, KE NAKO.

Ladies and gentlemen, I look forward to further deliberations, and more ideas on how we can raise the profile of women in a global climate change response, and some ideas we can take forward in Durban and beyond. I would like to commend thank the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice and the Femme Afrique Solidarite for organising this event. We do need partnerships with all relevant agencies, such UNEP, UNDP, African Union for the empowerment of women in efforts to safeguard our environment and combat the effects of climate change, and this is an important step.

I thank you!