



**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**MR. SINDISO NGWENYA, SECRETARY GENERAL - COMESA AT THE  
PAN AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY SUMMIT ON  
CLIMATE CHANGE: THE APOCALYPTIC THREAT TO OUR GLOBAL  
COMMONS**

**NAIROBI, KENYA  
12 – 15 October, 2009**

**Guest of Honour, His Excellency Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya;**

**The Speaker of the Kenya Parliament, Honourable Kenneth Marende, EGH, MP;**

**Honourable Ministers here present;**

**Honourable Members of Parliament from the African continent;**

**Dr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP;**

**Distinguished guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. Allow me at the very outset to express my profound gratitude to His Excellency Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya for sparing time in his busy schedule to come and officially open this historic Summit of Parliamentarians on climate change. Your Excellency your presence this morning is a reaffirmation of the importance that you attach to one of challenges of our life time which is wreaking havoc on the poor and will make the realization of the Millennium Development Goals a mirage.

It is gratifying to note that the representatives of the people – the Parliamentarians have decided to contribute to Africa's common position on climate change. The importance of this Summit need not be over emphasized in that with almost sixty days remaining before the Copenhagen Conference there is need to forge a consensus between developed and developing countries and agree on a new global deal. Failure to agree on the Post Kyoto Protocol dispensation that will robustly

and aggressively curb the concentration of carbon dioxide and other green house gases in the atmosphere is not an option given the fact that our planet is under threat of extinction. Available data reveal that these green house gases in the atmosphere have reached 435 parts per million (ppm) of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents. This is almost twice the 280 parts per million before industrialization in the nineteenth century.

2. The theme of the Summit “Towards a Common Position on Climate Justice and Equity” is very appropriate in that any Post Kyoto Protocol Agreement on Climate Change that is not based on “justice and equity” will accentuate the current globalization process of social and economic “apartheid”. It is a fact that the billions of poor people in developing countries have not contributed to green house gas emissions, yet they are the worst affected. The evidence is there to see on a daily basis. Prolonged droughts, floods and extreme heat waves are a frequent phenomenon. Here in Kenya pastoralists have seen their heads of livestock die in thousands and those involved in both subsistence and commercial agriculture have seen the crops wither and die. All this is due to climate change.

**Mr. Speaker,  
Honourable Members of Parliament**

3. Whilst it is now universally accepted on the basis of scientific evidence that Africa has only contributed about 3.8% of green house emissions, the developed countries which account for more than 80 per cent of emissions continue to argue among themselves on how by whom and by when to cut the emissions. Only a few days ago in Bangkok, Thailand, the developed

countries insisted that developing countries should also make commitments on cutting green houses gases. This latest demand is bound to result in the collapse of the Copenhagen Conference. This is not in the interest of both developed and developing countries as the threat of global warming is not only humanitarian and ecological but also economic.

4. According to Professor Stern's Report, the economic damage due to global warming could amount to 5 to 20% of the global gross domestic product. What this tells us is that the cost of doing nothing will result in economic cost that is greater than the cost of making investment now for adaptation and mitigation which is estimated to be in region of US\$100 to 150 billion annually for Africa. Hence in the global "commons" where our fortunes are interdependent and inter-connected it is in the self interest of those who have polluted the earth to invest in our common future.

**Mr. Speaker,**

**Honourable Members of Parliament**

5. On the contribution of COMESA to the common Africa position for the Copenhagen Conference, I am happy to report that in December, 2008 at Poznan in Poland COMESA launched the African Bio-Carbon Initiative which was supported by the Group of 77 plus China. This was the first time in international negotiations that a regional organization from developing countries had submitted a comprehensive concrete proposal on climate change. Hitherto Africa and developing countries in general have been marginal players as evidenced by the negotiations that resulted in the current Kyoto Protocol.

6. The African Bio Carbon Initiative is informed by the realities of African economies which depend on agriculture and forestry. Hence Agriculture, Sustainable Forestry and Land Use (AFOLU) constitutes an offensive negotiating position for Africa in particular and developing countries in general. AFOLU complements Reduced Emissions on Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) which was agreed upon at the Bali Conference in Indonesia. The inclusion of all Bio- Carbons means that the post Kyoto Protocol will benefit all countries irrespective of whether they are in the savanna or equatorial belt. The consulting firm McKinsey estimates that Bio-Carbon trade for Africa could generate about US\$250 billion annually by 2020. This is because the vast landmass of Africa makes agriculture and forest resources important sinks to sequester more than 20% of current global emissions. To unlock this potential, improved productivity sustainable forestry management and land use, including mass access to water and clean commercial energy are essential. It is imperative that agriculture is included in the new regime for Africa to get a new deal and incentives to mitigate climate change.

7. It is encouraging that the draft UNFCCC negotiating text to be tabled and hopefully concluded in Copenhagen in December this year includes both REDD and AFOLU. In order for Africa to contribute to mitigating climate change there is need for developed countries to transfer technology and resources. These are estimated to be US\$150 billion annually. The contribution by COMESA to the AU Africa position on Climate change has been made possible by generous funding from the Government of Norway and the Rucker Feller Foundation. National Round Tables on Climate

Change have been organized for both Parliamentarian and Civil Society. In addition a Working Group of scientist has been established to support the negotiations by marshalling scientific evidence.

8. Africa missed out on the industrial, agrarian, ICT, technological and social revolutions. Africa can contribute to the green revolution that will be unleashed by a low carbon economy, provided that developed countries contribute funding for both adaptation and mitigation which is estimated by 2020 to be \$120 billion for adaptation and another \$120 billion for mitigation.

9. At the continental level, Africa has done the following:

- Taken the Climate Change agenda to the Heads of State, ministers, civil society and business. Every country has a Climate Change department
- A continental African Ministerial Conference on the Environment has been set up tasked with the development of a unified African response to Climate Change
- The Africa group is speaking with one voice, and is active at the UNFCCC
- Africa lacks resources, capacity and technology for adaptation and mitigation hence the insistence that these requirements be in the global agreement

**Mr. Speaker,**  
**Honourable Members of Parliament,**

10. I would be failing in my duty if I do not seize this opportunity to tell you more about the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, otherwise known as COMESA. COMESA is a regional economic community that promotes social economic development principally through cooperation in trade and investment. Established in 1994 as a successor to the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) for Eastern and Southern Africa, it is composed of nineteen member states with a total population of almost 400 million people and a GDP of US\$ 415 billion (2008). Its member states are: Burundi, Comoros, Congo D.R., Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Secretariat of COMESA is in Lusaka, Zambia.

11. Among its achievements is the establishment of Africa's largest Free Trade Area (FTA) in 2000 with fourteen member states fully participating. COMESA launched its Customs Union in June 2009. Intra-COMESA trade that stood at a mere US\$3 billion in 2000 is now more than US\$15 billion annually. The FDI inflows into the region have risen from US\$3 billion in 2000 to over US\$24 billion in 2008.

12. Apart from trade and investment facilitation, COMESA has a well established stable of programmes ranging from agriculture and livestock, infrastructure development, ICT, monetary harmonisation, gender, peace and security, public procurement modernisation.

13. The organisation has also established robust specialised institutions hosted in different member states to support its regional integration agenda. These are the COMESA Court of Justice in Sudan, the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank (PTA Bank) in Burundi, the COMESA Re-Insurance Company (ZEP-RE) in Kenya, the Africa Trade Insurance Agency (ATI) in Kenya, the COMESA Fund in Mauritius, the Regional Multi-disciplinary Centre of Excellence in Mauritius, the COMESA Clearing House in Zimbabwe, the Regional Investment Agency (RIA) in Egypt, the COMESA Telecommunications Company (COMTEL) in Djibouti, the COMESA Competition Commission in Malawi, the Federation of Associations of Women in Business (FEMCOM) in Malawi, the Leather and Leather Products Institute (LLPI) in Ethiopia, and the COMESA Business Council (CBC) based at the Secretariat in Lusaka.

14. The Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) is a Specialized Agency of COMESA launched on September 24 2008 to integrate small farmers in national, regional and international markets. Its main goal is to increase farmer productivity and incomes in the COMESA region through trade in staple crops. Targeted staple crops include maize, sorghum, rice, beans, pulses, cassava, and bananas.

15. These institutions have greatly assisted the integration and development process in COMESA, by providing the required flanking measures. For instance, Rwanda and Burundi have already benefitted from the COMESA Adjustment Facility of the COMESA Fund for compensation for revenue losses resulting from reduction of customs duties to implement

the Custom Union Common External tariff of both COMESA and the East African Community. So, COMESA is about development, and in line with its raison d'être, which is to improve the living conditions of the people of the region.

16. In conclusion I would like to appeal to this august gathering of Parliamentarians to send a strong message to our developed partners to the effect that although Africa is not responsible for green house emissions that threaten the survival of the earth, but that as part of global commons Africa is prepared to contribute to both mitigation and adaptation on condition that additional resources are made available by developed countries. This is what equity and social justice require in view of the fact that Africa is paying a price for the affluence of those who have already climbed up the development ladder.

I thank you for your kind attention

**Sindiso Ngwenya**  
**COMESA Secretary General**