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Statement by the

**Chairperson of the African Union Commission
H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma**

At the

**Meeting of the Committee of Heads of State and
Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC),**

*held on the margins of the 69th UN General Assembly
and UN Climate Change Summit at the Office of the
Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to
the United Nations, 305 East 47th Street,*

September 22nd, 2014

New York, USA

Your Excellency, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Coordinator of CAHOSCC

Your Excellency, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Your Excellency, Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union, Minister of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Excellency Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission and other Commissioners

Excellencies, Heads of State and Members of CAHOSCC

Excellencies, Ministers and Leaders of Delegations

I am pleased to welcome you all to this meeting of the Committee of African Heads of States and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), convening here at a very critical point in the global negotiations on climate change and the post-2015 development agenda.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is worth repeating that even though Africa contributed and continues to contribute the least to global warming, it bears the brunt of the impact of climate change, representing an urgent and irreversible threat to human societies and the planet.

This ranges from the devastating impact of increasing sea temperatures on the livelihoods of coastal communities and islands, to the impact of rising sea levels on the very survival of the peoples of island states.

It reflects itself in the southwards expansion of the Sahara/Sahel desert, the drying up of the great Lake Chad, more severe and frequent droughts in Southern and East Africa, floods plaguing Mozambique and Sudan, unpredictable weather patterns that impacts on agriculture, and the threats everywhere to African biodiversity and eco systems.

All the above takes place at a time when Africa is pushing forward to build shared prosperity, by addressing its energy, transport, ICT, water and sanitation, and other infrastructure backlogs. We confront this threat as we focus on modernizing our agricultural and agro-processing sectors and seek to diversify our economies, through industrialization, building manufacturing and adding value to our natural resources.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Since Africa is so directly affected and since we started engaging based on a common position, our approach has been to focus on what we need to do to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and seeking to integrate the issues into our development planning.

There are a host of African initiatives, in virtually every single country, which as African leaders we must promote and popularize. This includes ensuring that as we power our continent, households, cities, rural areas and industry, we have an appropriate energy mix.

This includes pushing forward with hydro-electric projects such as the Inga dam in the DRC, the Renaissance dam in Ethiopia and other regional hydro projects in West and Southern Africa. It means that as African leaders we must promote the African Clean Energy Corridor along the eastern coast of Africa, which IRENA is implementing with affected states, with its mix of solar, wind, hydro and geothermal energy. We must promote and push these initiatives, and call on our partners to work with Africa on these critical projects.

Africa is also doing work to push back desertification through the Great Green Wall for Sahara and Sahel initiatives and the Sustainable Forest Management Programmes in Africa. We are pursuing national and regional initiatives on water and sanitation, and as part of CAADP promotes climate resilient and climate smart agriculture.

At national and continental levels, we are looking at climate associated risk management, ranging from strengthening our scientific monitoring capacities through the Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) programme and the African Regional Strategy on Meteorology; to the innovative Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) that provides coverage to participating countries against floods and droughts. The ARC is launching an extreme climate facility (XCF) to insure against risk, but also develop extreme climate indices and

thresholds that could be used to track severity and frequency of weather extremes across Africa.

Of course we have to develop the skills, science, technology and research capacity, to enable Africans across the continent to manage and drive innovations in all these areas. The AU will before the end of 2014, launch the Pan African University branch on Climate Change in Algeria, to build an African centre of excellence, sharing experiences and pooling our collective knowledge and best practices on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and on sustainable development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

These are amongst the major initiatives, which are at the core of Africa's drive for its common prosperity and human security, to help current generations to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and leave a better Africa for future generations.

This is what we are doing as Africa, but we also have expectations from the rest of the world.

Our expectations include the need for the revision of the global 2 degrees Celsius (2°C) goal to safer levels for all people, especially small island states; greater commitments from developed countries on reducing emissions; as well as technology transfer and resources to assist developing countries with mitigation and adaptation. In addition, the recent report of the Global Oceans Commission calls for a stand-alone goal in the Sustainable Development Goals on our oceans, a recommendation that Africa should support.

This CAHOSC meeting therefore has an important challenge: to consolidate the common African positions and sharpen our common messages; but also to ensure that we highlight what Africa is already doing for itself, and to fight for policy space in the climate change negotiations, that will allow Africa to develop and prosper.

I wish this important meeting fruitful deliberations. I thank you