

Thank you Chair and Distinguished delegates,

My name is Emily Tjale from a rural village of Ga-Ntwane, in the province of Mpumalanga, South Africa. I am speaking on behalf of GenderCC-Women for Climate Justice and also for many poor rural women who suffer from the destructive effects of climate change and face an anxious future. They need a just and equitable global climate change agreement.

Every year the world nations have been meeting to come up with a global climate change agreement. However, the voice of grassroots communities, particularly women, has effectively not been heard. These are people who depend on the weather for their survival yet their voice has been overshadowed by the corporations with their strong lobby and as a result their environmental, economic, social and cultural rights receive very little or no attention on the UNFCCC agenda.

I am nervous that COP17 might just be another talk-shop, we are desperately looking for the signs that will give us the confidence that it will not. At the moment, we are wondering what actually will happen with Kyoto Protocol?

The good news is that you as the world governments have the power to create positive change. A different world is not only possible, but it too, is already coming into being. There is evidence to show cutting carbon emissions can actually increase development, bringing real and lasting improvements in human welfare. It is not a coincidence that the nations which have succeeded in both cutting carbon emissions and strengthening the economy are also some of the most democratic states in the world. Building capacity, developing people, growing entrepreneurship, and promoting innovation are seldom well done under dictatorships.

What we hope to see here at COP 17 are the world's governments giving thanks that we still do have national and world governments with some moral authority. The origin of the UN itself lies in many people's dreams of creating a just and peaceful world. We call on those governments to give effect to the historic mission of the UN, and to take powerful and decisive action to enact a legally binding agreement which sees immediate cuts in world carbon emissions.

In conclusion, we call on the world's most developed countries and the emerging economies to lead by example in these negotiations. When the informal settlement is on fire, you do not stop to ask who started the fire. You put out the fire first and sort out the issue of responsibility afterwards. At least, that is the way we do things in Africa. That is why we will expect our South African government to exercise ethical leadership for both the continent and the developing South at COP 17 and beyond. We need a sense of urgency around Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period which we believe should not be prolonged in order to continue with the LCA process in the same sense of urgency.