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The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

Financing Transformational Change and Achieving SDGs in Africa

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Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, Disaster and Beach Management

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Madam Chairperson,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Friends,
Ladies and Gentleman

Good Afternoon,
Allow me at the outset to commend TERI for organizing this important and timely event on sustainable development and climate change aimed at shaping global solutions in the highest interest of mankind.

I am indeed deeply honoured to address this august gathering and present our views on Financing transformational change and achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa, an issue which is so pertinent to the African continent and to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), such as Mauritius in the Indian Ocean.

Following the call of the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, I quote “develop a new generation of sustainable development goals to pick up where the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) leave off and agree on the means to achieve them” unquote. The African Union, following a thorough consultation with its members state, adopted a common position on the post 2015 Development Agenda in 2014.
The Common African Position for a post 2015 Development Agenda covers environmental sustainability, natural resources management and risk management of natural disasters; finance and partnership; human-centered development; peace and security; science, technology and innovation; and structural economic transformation.

We firmly believe that an all-inclusive Development Agenda need to pay special attention to the sound management of natural resources, biodiversity conservation and proper mobilization of financial resources to attain these objectives. There is a dire need to give due consideration to sustainable production and consumption as well as enhanced productivity and efficiency in all sectors of the economy. It is therefore of utmost importance for us to reorient and redesign our policies and strategies for development that is all inclusive and sustainable.

Madam Chairperson,

The financial cost of achieving development in Africa amounts to hundreds of billions of dollars annually. This can only be financed from a mix of sources ranging from Official Development Assistance, Foreign Direct Investment as well as an enhanced domestic resource mobilization process. Achieving the SDGs for Africa will only be possible if the financing support is adequate, predictable, sustainable and transparent. We
embrace the position of like-minded countries including India for the transfer of technology and financial support.

Only an Africa with transformative socio economic development will be able to avoid the unattainable initiative development in a resource constrained world.

There must be a paradigm shift in the relationship between the African states and the international community. The relationship between Africa and the international community must undergo transformed change which is rooted in the principle of equity of nations, mutual collaboration for mutual interest and respect for the ability and right of Africans to lead their own change.

We have brought a number of institutional changes and financial incentives to ease making businesses in Mauritius while enhancing the protection and management of our resources. Sustainable Development is now the key locomotive to enhance socio economic development in an environmentally friendly manner.

Mauritius has also learnt to value its most precious resources which is the human resource. We are convinced that the human capacity is the most important element to gear our country towards a future that is prosperous for all, where economic
success will be equally characterized by equity, ethics and social justice.

However, we are also aware that our hard-earned development can be jeopardized by external and natural factors which are beyond our control. It is known that Climate Change is one of the greatest challenges faced by mankind and will impact disproportionately on the poor and most vulnerable countries. Climate Change is not an issue that will affect only future generations; it is taking its toll already today in an alarming manner. Recently Mauritius faced a super storm, Bansi where storm surges reaches up to 50m in the general area of St. Brandon, Agalega and Rodrigues. St Brandon was flooded up to 3m inland which caused inhabitants to seek refuge on roofs of buildings - a new meteorological phenomenon coming from the South Pole.

No continent will be struck as severely by the impacts of climate change as Africa and SIDS in general due to its geographical situation and limited capacities to adapt.

Right now in real time, I am handling a disaster in one of the atoll of Mauritius. Mauritius manage a vast extent of ocean about 2.7 Million Km², and a number of foreign vessels came to our sea for fishing. Nearby one of our island St Brandon a foreign fishing vessel is grounded and there is a risk of oil spill. Our officers of the National Coast Guard have been mobilized
and I am happy to inform you that the situation is being successfully controlled.

How can Africa and SIDS make progress towards the next level of development when our survival is uncertain, and our limited resources are being diverted towards managing the impacts of climate change?

However, in a spirit of solidarity to save the planet from disastrous impacts of Climate Change, Africa and SIDS have committed important resources. We now need concrete actions from the industrialized and developed countries. At the dawn of the Paris 2015 summit, we need concrete and meaningful actions, and forceful commitment from the developed countries.

The deal must include the following elements:

• First, more ambitious actions for Greenhouse gas reduction before and after 2020;
• Second, a central role for equity;
• Third, a strong legal framework and clear rules;
• Fourth, sustained and transparent access to public finance for adaptation and transition to a low carbon economy; and
• Fifth, clear links to the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals.
There is a need for reporting and verification tools of finance mobilized and received, for a clear definition of SDGs finance and better identification of developing countries’ needs.

We must ensure that the 2015 Agreement is capable of responding to the latest science and keeping us collectively on track to limit temperature rise to below 1.5°C objective.

Let me conclude by saying that we are at a critical juncture and we must act with urgency. Without international solidarity and enhanced financial support, Africa and SIDS would **not** be able to meet the SDGs targets.

I thank you for your attention.