

**STATEMENT FOR CLR MPHO PARKS TAU, EXECUTIVE MAYOR OF
JOHANNESBURG AT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CITY'S
HOSTING OF THE C40 SUMMIT ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

New York City, 12 March 2013

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the Mayor of New York City, members of the media, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for the opportunity to share a few thoughts with you on the role played by the world's major cities to lead initiatives on climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is, as always a pleasure to visit our sister city of New York and to learn from your unique experience.

When I was last hosted by Mayor Bloomberg in August 2011 we discussed a broad range of issues of mutual concern – most notably on the global initiatives required to address climate change concerns.

Today we are taking this initiative another step further with the announcement that the City of Johannesburg will host the fifth large Cities Climate Leadership Summit in February 2014.

The Johannesburg Summit which is being hosted on the African continent for the first time will bring together an unprecedented group of leaders of the world's largest cities. They include business people, environmentalists, activists and community representatives, who will deliberate on the progress we are making and also suggest meaningful interventions we can jointly undertake to address issues of the environment.

It will be a historic moment for Johannesburg – but also for South Africa and the African continent as a whole. Hosting the event is a clear recognition of the growing role that Johannesburg, and the Africa continent can play to find solutions to the most pressing issues facing our globe.

Climate change is not an issue that affects only the industrialised countries of the northern hemisphere. It is an everyday reality for the people of Africa in rapidly expanding cities, as well as rural areas faced by the consequences of dramatic changes in weather patterns. Among other things, this threatens crops and livestock as well as their ability to survive.

As big cities of the world, we have a responsibility to provide leadership and to share our experiences, best practice and capacity for innovation with the rest of the globe. Under the inspirational leadership of Mayor Bloomberg over the past 30 months, the C40 group has taken on this responsibility with a remarkable sense of purpose and energy.

We take action on this front because of our shared conviction that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time. This generation of leadership does not have the luxury of passing the responsibilities to our successors.

Johannesburg has had the privilege of working with the President Clinton's foundation and our colleagues in the C40 group. This has positioned us well to become a leading player in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as combat the impact of climate change.

Our city is has already started to introduce a citywide safer, faster and affordable public transport network, known as the Rea Vaya Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. The objective is to make a dramatic move away from traffic congesting private vehicle usage and to manage future urban settlement patterns to support the growth of environmentally responsible public transport.

As a city administration, we demonstrated leadership with the retrofitting of all council buildings with energy-efficient fixtures and encouraged the private sector residents to follow the lead. New housing projects are equipped with solar water heaters, insulated ceilings and compact fluorescent lamps to save energy cost and harness the benefits of the 365 days of sunshine a year that Johannesburg is so well known for.

We announced plans to introduce South Africa's biggest landfill gas-to-energy project to harvest methane gas from waste material and turn it into renewable energy. And we have started with a programme of separation of waste at source. This will not only divert waste away from limited landfill space but also create jobs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have no doubt that the Johannesburg Summit will provide the megacity members of the C40 group with another vital opportunity to develop an effective agenda with well-defined and measurable goals to combat climate change and promote urban green growth. We look forward to welcome you in our friendly city in 2014.

Remember that you may still explore Joburg even before 2014. This is our city's significant year as, in addition to C40, we are the proud hosts of the annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Metropolis Organisation in July and the One Young World Summit in October.

I thank you.

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