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**Climate Change Conference
12 October 2017
Windhoek Country Club and Casino**

The Southern Times a Regional weekly newspaper, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, is hosting a Climate Change Forum on the 12th of October 2017 at Windhoek Country Club. The Climate Change Forum is being hosted weeks before the starts of the United Nations global Conference of Parties (COP23), in Bonn, Germany. The Climate Change Forum therefore presents Southern African Development nations, Non-Governmental Organizations and all stakeholders to firm up their positions on climate change and mitigating factors ahead of the COP in Germany.

The Windhoek Climate Change Forum will create a platform for interaction between the Government, media and NGOs that are actively engaged in the climate change fight. The SADC Region has borne the brunt of the devastation brought about by effects of climate change. While some of the problems that SADC nations are currently grappling with, African countries are not the cause of such problems. Because of this, there is urgent need for a multifaceted and increased stakeholders engagements to find ways to mitigate the challenges brought about by climate change. It is imperative that all stakeholders and concerned citizens realize sooner rather than later that the challenges nations are facing from the effects of climate change cannot be left to Governments alone to resolve.

As a Pan African newspaper, The Southern Times, plays in integral role in bringing public awareness, educating as well keeping up to date the public on the effects of climate. Organizing and hosting this Forum in collaboration with the MET is also one of the ways The Southern Times can play its Pan Africanist role as opposed to merely reporting on the challenges African nations face.

After the African Union in January 2007 adopted a common position on fighting Climate Change, having realized the seriousness of the problems it faces, the Forum would also discuss achievements that Governments have made since then. It is worth noting that after the AU adopted a common position, Regional blocs Common Market for Southern Africa (COMESA), East Africa Community (EAC) and SADC came up with a tripartite initiative known as “The African Solution” on Climate Change adaptation and mitigation.

Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia Right Honourable Netumbo Nandi Ndaitwah, will officially open the Windhoek Climate Change Forum. After that the Forum would involve panel discussions with various local and Regional experts on climate change. The Forum is also organized to have breakaway sessions which will report back to the Plenary Session.

At the end of the Forum, participants will produce a Communique and a concise report that will be forwarded to SADC Governments’ Ministries under whose docket climate change falls. The Report will also be shared with the SADC Secretariat and will also form a basis for arguments SADC participants to COP23 would be presenting.

1. OBJECTIVES

The challenges that most poor countries such as those in Africa face is how to adapt under climate change. Adaptation has become more pertinent as the effects of climate change on Africa becomes more and more challenging. For example, how can SADC nations’ whose economies rely mostly on rain-fed agriculture, adapt while at the same time deftly minimizing challenges of cyclical droughts on poor rural and subsistence farmers.

Adaptation also requires Governments making of, or establishing early warning systems, in countries where it doesn't exist, on drought and floods whose effects are devastating to rural livelihoods and the economies in the general.

The Windhoek Climate Change Forum should therefore make a declaration which spells out what Governments and all stakeholders need to do if the Region is to adapt

to the devastating effects of climate change. Some of the Objectives that the Windhoek Climate Change Forum should meet are:

- a) Come up with strategies to raise awareness on Climate Change impact on rural communities most of whom rely on rain-fed farming for sustenance;
- b) To create awareness among urban and rural citizens on environmental friendly lifestyles and to have these adopted as daily lifestyles so as to reduce carbon emissions for the better of the environment;
- c) To craft adaptation and mitigation methods of dealing with the challenges posed about by Climate Change. Helping communities cope and adapt with challenges of Climate Change is not prerogative of the Government only. This calls for a multi-sectoral approach and should involve everybody from NGOs to private sector as effects of climate change affects environment in which private investors are doing their businesses;
- d) To promote a bottom-up participation model through which local communities are made aware and participate fully in efforts to mitigate effects of climate change. This means managing collaboration is administered from cell/local community level through a well-coordinated communication channels;
- e) To find ways of how to make use of modern technological inventions such as apps and other forms to educate the community and warn them of impending weather conditions such as droughts, flooding etc;
- f) Come up with a Raise Awareness Campaign that targets the entire SADC Region with specific focus on information dissemination through various mediums such as TV, online news channels, social media among others to heighten awareness on what citizens need to do to mitigate effects of climate change and reduce carbon footprints;
- g) Establish channels through which NGOs and Government collaborate more efficiently. As policy makers, Government agencies need reliable and quality data which they would be able to use to plan and track effects of climate change management policies and regulations; and
- h) Come up with proposals for appropriate action Governments and all stakeholders need to adopt as a matter of urgency to manage and adaptor to devastating effects of Climate Change

Scope of Discussion

The Southern Times Newspaper has been working hard to develop an exciting program including internationally renowned keynote speakers, guest speakers, and a wide selection of oral and poster presentations as well as social activity that will be topical and engaging with wide range of participants.

The discussion framework will see different intellectuals and academics debating on different fraternities. Some experts will give opinion on agriculture, Environment, Weather, Health and mining as well as the political aspect of combating the challenges associated with climate change.

Attendees

Attendance to the summit is made up of a cross section of delegates from most of the SADC region members' states. These countries share more or less the same weather conditions and their challenge from the set hypothesis are more or less the same. Expected participants to be 300-500 from experts, media, politicians, councillors and farmers.

Benefits

Benefits of the summit include but not limited to finding solutions to a common problem. Encouraging intellectual and political debate on issues affecting Namibia and the region. Also finding common solutions to remedying the challenges.

Funding

The funding model of the conference is driven by participants and well-wishers including civil society, government and the southern times.

Coverage

Coverage is open to all media outlets in Namibia and abroad. Engagements and invites have been sent out so that we have the best coverage for the conference.