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## **TITLE : NATIONAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON SOUTH AFRICA'S NEGOTIATING MANDATE FOR UNFCCC COP29**

### **SALUTATIONS**

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I would like to greet Deputy Chairperson of the PCC, Valli Moosa in absentia, the Honorable Minister of DFFE, Honorable Dion George, the PCC Executive Director, sector partners, all the delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

Honorable Minister, Chairperson, Delegates, esteem guests, it is evident that climate change poses huge risks for our country and the world. We are witnessing deadly floods in many countries in various continents on a daily basis. Many developing countries including our own in the continent of Africa are highly susceptible to climate risks and extreme events, such as severe drought and frequent heavy rainfalls that results in deadly floods that put basic services under threat and cause damages on infrastructure that strain public budgets. If not addressed, climate-related risks could jeopardize our economic growth and financial stability, while disproportionately affecting the poor and the vulnerable groups majority of whom are women, children, the elderly and those living with disabilities.

Given the continued and increasing pressures of climate change, acting at the local level is an urgent matter. Local and subregional governments across the world and in South Africa, both rural and urban are in the front line of climate action, but they are unable to shoulder the massive infrastructure investments and adaptation efforts required for sustainable, low-to-no emission, and climate resilient development.

As frontline responders to the effects of global warming, local and subregional governments have a challenging task of building resilient communities. However, a low carbon resilient society requires a structural

change of enormous scale and speed. This requires joint action by all sectors of society and all levels of governments. Coordinating these efforts and ensuring their coherence within a multi-level and multi-lateral governance system is key to driving forward effective, efficient, and ambitious climate actions.

Honorable Minister, Chairperson and Delegates, in this context of growing political debate internationally, alongside ever-rising temperatures, COP29 is more important than ever for bridging these divides and getting the world back on track for 1.5°C. The UNFCCC COP is central to tackling climate change as the only platform which brings together all countries in the world to discuss and collaborate on climate action. However, as local governments we remain concerned that the world is not on track to achieve the SDGs, risks overshooting the 1.5°C objective of the Paris Agreement, is failing to adapt to the changing climate, and that nature is declining at rates unprecedented in human history. The window of time until COP30 is the most consequential as Parties are working on new National Determined Contributions (NDCs) due in 2025 for defending against climate breakdown and keeping multilateralism alive.

COP28 recognized the importance of multilevel action and the role of local and subnational governments in advancing global climate action. We applaud this progress as we now move into the implementation of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Consensus. To this effect, we urge :

1. South Africa as a trailblazer and leader in implementing multilevel climate action and multilevel Nationally Determined Contribution, join the 72 Parties who have endorsed the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) - an initiative which aims to pursue efforts across all levels of governments for enhanced NDCs by 2025; and
2. DFFE and sector partners to support the Town-Hall COPs initiative that aims to amplify local climate perspectives within broader climate processes, thus connecting local climate action to national through the new Climate Change Act and global processes. This process encourages Mayors to convene their Town Hall COPs as

an innovative approach to basically bring the COP to the local level, where local government administration, politicians, communities, experts, local stakeholders and civil society come together to assess and discuss climate mitigation, adaptation, finance, and loss & damage in a condensed format.

As organized Local Government, together with our partners, we see ourselves as implementation partners and keen to support the development, financing and implementation of ambitious NDCs, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Long-Term Strategies (LTSSs) and other key strategies ahead of 2025. As a result, we urge the South African negotiating team to work hard in providing leadership together with other Parties, to ensure that COP29:

1. Builds on the COP28 Joint Statement on Climate, Nature and People and connect with Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, to foster stronger synergies between mitigation, adaptation, resilience, nature-based solutions, food security, land degradation, biodiversity protection and restoration, and health, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thereby ensuring that no one is left behind in the global fight against climate change.
2. Delivers an ambitious New Collective Quantified Goal on climate finance that enables a just, equitable and a well-funded transition across all levels of government including direct access for local and other subnational governments, in connection with the reform of global finance architecture and Multilateral Development Banks.
3. Stresses the importance of inclusive Just Transition Pathways that are reflective of the countries' individual socio-economic development priorities.
4. Ensures that grants, rather than loans, and concessional terms are prioritized so that the debt burden on local and other subnational governments is not exacerbated.

5. Formalizes local and other subnational voices in the relevant UN Agendas and strengthen their engagement in UN intergovernmental bodies as suggested in the revised version of the Pact for the Future.
6. Puts a spotlight on adaptation and secure the necessary resources by being specific on how countries will deliver on the Global Goal on Adaptation and put in place measures to cope with and minimize the unavoidable impacts of climate change we are currently battling with at the local level

In closing, Honourable Minister, Chairperson and Delegates, we recognize that COPs cannot substitute for progress in national policy-making and implementation but they are a primary platform for building international consensus on how to address the ever-worsening climate crisis. All Parties must be committed to step up and contribute towards building climate resilience, putting people and nature first in pursuit of a resilient world where we do not just survive climate shocks and stresses but thrive despite of them.

Thank You