



**WWF** *for a living planet*<sup>®</sup>

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**Media release**

**Immediate Release**

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## **WWF commends South Africa's emission reduction commitment**

**Copenhagen, Denmark** – WWF today commended the announcement by South Africa that President Jacob Zuma will attend the UN climate negotiations in Copenhagen and bring with him South Africa's contribution towards the global effort to reduce emissions. The announcement included a timeline for the country's emissions to peak and decline – the first such commitment offered by a major developing nation.

"The current position from our State President is indeed bold and we are hopeful that leaders from the industrialised nations will comply with his conditions and play ball," says CEO of WWF South Africa, Dr Morné Du Plessis.

"Within Africa, South Africa is by far the largest emitter of greenhouse gases and it has therefore been key that the South African government delivers such a bold statement. President Zuma has thrown down the gauntlet for others and it is up to world leaders to show the political will necessary to secure a positive outcome in Copenhagen. The science is clear, the urgency even clearer."

"South Africa's pledge is another example of emerging economies contributing in a meaningful way to secure a successful outcome in Copenhagen," said Tasneem Essop, WWF senior policy advisor based in South Africa.

"We hope that these commitments will spark a race to the top by pushing industrialized countries to raise their ambition level and put forward more ambitious emission reduction targets as well as the type of international support needed to capture all of the efforts currently being offered by developing countries."

In today's announcement, South Africa committed to actions that would result in a 34% emission reduction below business as usual by 2020 and 42% by 2025. This would enable South Africa's emissions to peak between 2020 and 2025, stabilize for 10 years and then decline in absolute terms. The announcement noted that these commitments are conditional on a fair, ambitious and effective outcome in the international climate negotiations culminating now in Copenhagen and on financial and technical support from the international community.

"Incorporating a timeline for the peak and decline of emissions is a critical element of South Africa's proposal because it provides additional certainty of absolute reductions over time," added Essop.

"Today's announcement shows that South Africa recognizes that they can grow and develop their economy, alleviate poverty while at the same time stabilizing and reducing their emissions. This represents strong leadership for developing and developed nations alike."

**About WWF:**

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

**About Vote Earth:**

The Vote Earth campaign builds on the call for action on climate change provided by millions of people, companies and communities during Earth Hour in March this year. The campaign provides a platform for the people of the world to deliver world leaders a mandate for the right decision to be made at the United Nations Climate Summit in Copenhagen in December 2009. Find out more about the campaign at [www.wwf.org.za](http://www.wwf.org.za) Vote Earth is a WWF initiative, proudly supported by Nedbank.

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