forestry, fisheries & the environment
Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTERIAL SPEAKING NOTES AT THE 38TH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL ON SUBSTANCES THAT DEPLETE THE OZONE LAYER (MOP 38), KIGALI, RWANDA, 02 NOVEMBER TO 06 NOVEMBER 2026.

Executive Secretary,

Distinguished Ministers

Heads of Delegation,

As South Africa takes the floor for the first time at this meeting, I wish to extend our sincere appreciation to the Ozone Secretariat and the Bureau for the excellent preparations and arrangements leading to the Thirty-Eighth Meeting of the Parties, including the organisation of this High-Level Segment. We further commend the Government and people of the Republic of Rwanda for their warm hospitality and for hosting us in Kigali, the city that gave birth to the historic Kigali Amendment. Allow me also to reaffirm South Africa's alignment with the statement delivered on behalf of the African Group and to express our continued commitment to the objectives and principles of the Montreal Protocol and its Kigali Amendment.

As we gather in Kigali, the birthplace of the Kigali Amendment, South Africa reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the objectives of the Montreal Protocol and its continued success as one of the most effective multilateral environmental agreements. The Protocol remains a powerful example of what can be achieved through science-based decision-making, international cooperation, and shared responsibility.

Madam President,

South Africa is proud to celebrate the achievements of the Kigali Amendment and the progress made by Parties in addressing the climate impacts associated with hydrofluorocarbons. South Africa ratified the Kigali Amendment in 2019 and has since undertaken significant measures to implement its commitments. These include the establishment of an HFC licensing and quota system, strengthened regulatory and enforcement measures, expanded stakeholder engagement, and the implementation of capacity-building

programmes that support the transition to climate-friendly and energy-efficient alternatives. Through these interventions, South Africa has commenced the phasedown of HFCs in accordance with the schedule agreed under the Amendment.

South Africa is also proud to report that it has achieved an extraordinary 97.5 per cent phase-down of hydrochlorofluorocarbons, positioning the country significantly ahead of its commitments under the Montreal Protocol. This milestone reflects the strong collaboration between government, industry, technical institutions, and international partners in advancing environmentally sustainable technologies and achieving compliance objectives.

In support of the transition to low-global-warming-potential technologies, South Africa, in partnership with technical institutions, implementing agencies, and private-sector stakeholders, has successfully implemented four pioneering demonstration projects across key sectors of the economy, including grocery retails, dairy processing and manufacturing, and public healthcare facilities. These projects showcase the technical feasibility, environmental benefits, and commercial viability of climate-friendly and energy-efficient cooling technologies. They also provide practical evidence to support broader market transformation, accelerate the uptake of sustainable cooling solutions, and facilitate the replication of best practices within South Africa and across the African region.

These achievements demonstrate that environmental protection, climate action, energy efficiency, and economic development can be advanced simultaneously while supporting the objectives of both the Montreal Protocol and the Kigali Amendment.

While we celebrate these achievements, South Africa encourages the remaining Parties that have not yet ratified the Kigali Amendment to do so as a matter of urgency. Universal ratification remains essential to realising the full environmental and climate benefits of the Amendment and ensuring that all Parties contribute to a successful global transition toward sustainable cooling solutions.

Madam President,

South Africa wishes to emphasise the importance of a robust and adequately funded replenishment of the Multilateral Fund. The successful completion of HCFC phase-out activities and the effective

implementation of HFC phasedown obligations require sustained and predictable financial and technical support.

Developing countries continue to face important challenges relating to technology transfer, institutional strengthening, customs enforcement, servicing sector transformation, and the adoption of energy-efficient and low-global-warming-potential alternatives. South Africa therefore supports a replenishment that provides sufficient resources to enable developing countries to meet their obligations while ensuring an equitable and sustainable transition. Ambitious commitments can only be achieved when matched by adequate means of implementation.

South Africa remains committed to ensuring that the implementation of the Montreal Protocol delivers tangible environmental benefits alongside socio-economic benefits, particularly for women, youth, and historically disadvantaged communities.

To date, South Africa has trained 1,002 refrigeration and air-conditioning informal servicing technicians and 35 lecturers on good servicing practices, refrigerant management, energy-efficient technologies, and the safe handling of natural refrigerants, including hydrocarbon-based and other low-global-warming-potential alternatives.

In recent months, more than 270 women have been empowered through targeted skills development programmes linked to the refrigeration and air-conditioning sector, while 50 women technicians have received specialised technical training to strengthen their participation and advancement within the industry. These initiatives are designed not only to improve access to formal employment opportunities but also to equip participants with certified skills, practical experience, and tools that support entrepreneurship and self-employment. Particular emphasis is placed on empowering participants from rural communities and previously disadvantaged backgrounds.

As South Africa advances implementation of the Kigali Amendment, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment is planning to train an additional 800 informal refrigeration and air-conditioning technicians. Importantly, the programme aims to train between 400 women technicians,

reflecting our commitment to promoting gender inclusivity and increasing women's participation in the cooling sector.

This programme will focus on the safe handling, installation, servicing, and maintenance with natural refrigerants, while promoting international safety standards, leak prevention practices, energy efficiency, and responsible refrigerant management. Through these initiatives, South Africa seeks to ensure that the transition to sustainable cooling solutions is supported by a skilled workforce capable of safely and effectively meeting the growing demand for environmentally sound technologies.

Madam President,

South Africa firmly believes that the continued success of the Montreal Protocol is founded on its proven institutional arrangements, sound governance structures, and effective implementation mechanisms. The Protocol has consistently delivered measurable environmental outcomes and remains a model for international cooperation.

As Parties consider the future evolution of the Protocol, we should exercise caution against pursuing institutional changes where no compelling need has been demonstrated. We must preserve and strengthen the mechanisms that have enabled the Protocol to achieve unparalleled success for nearly four decades. In this regard, South Africa believes that we should avoid seeking to fix what is not broken and instead focus on strengthening what has already proven effective.

Madam President,

Atmospheric monitoring is a critical component of ensuring the integrity and effectiveness of the Montreal Protocol. South Africa recognizes the importance of atmospheric monitoring networks in supporting scientific assessments, compliance efforts, and evidence-based decision-making.

In this regard, South Africa has formally expressed its interest in hosting an atmospheric monitoring station. Such a facility would strengthen scientific capacity within Africa, contribute to global monitoring

efforts, and enhance regional participation in atmospheric observation and assessment activities. We look forward to engaging further with relevant institutions and partners on this important initiative.

South Africa also supports the adoption of a budget that enables the Ozone Secretariat to continue effectively discharging its mandate. The Secretariat plays an indispensable role in supporting Parties, facilitating negotiations, coordinating scientific assessments, promoting compliance, and ensuring the effective implementation of the Protocol. Continued support for the Secretariat remains essential to the sustained success of the Montreal Protocol.

Madam President,

Looking ahead, South Africa believes that greater attention should be dedicated to strengthening energy-efficiency initiatives in the refrigeration and air-conditioning sector, enhancing customs and enforcement capacity to address illegal trade in controlled substances and equipment, and expanding technical skills development to support the transition to climate-friendly cooling technologies.

The implementation of the Kigali Amendment presents a unique opportunity to achieve multiple benefits simultaneously, including ozone layer protection, climate change mitigation, sustainable development, job creation, energy security, skills development, gender equality, and economic empowerment. We therefore encourage continued collaboration among Parties, implementing agencies, scientific institutions, industry stakeholders, and development partners to ensure that no country is left behind.

In closing, South Africa reaffirms its full commitment to the implementation of the Montreal Protocol and the Kigali Amendment. Through partnership, solidarity, adequate financial support, strong scientific cooperation, and sustained political commitment, we can continue building on the Protocol's extraordinary legacy while creating opportunities for our people, particularly women, youth, and vulnerable communities, to participate meaningfully in an inclusive green economy.

Let us preserve the strengths of the Montreal Protocol, ensure adequate support for all Parties, and collectively accelerate our progress towards a climate-friendly, sustainable, and prosperous future.

I thank you.