

Statement from the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Thabo Makgoba, on flooding in Namibia and Angola

Tuesday 23 March 2009

'Continuing exaggerated weather patterns across Southern Africa are a further illustration of the urgent need to tackle global warming' Archbishop Thabo Makgoba said on Tuesday, calling for swift and decisive global action on climate change.

Speaking in the week before the G20 summit, the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town said 'We have had enough of talking. The international community cannot continue to prevaricate while countries like ours are increasingly suffering inestimable human cost, in deaths, displacement, and the destruction of livelihoods. Northern Namibia is experiencing the worst flooding in decades, as is Southern Angola. This year has already seen serious storms, flooding and loss of life in Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal in South Africa, as well as in Mozambique, where we are told we should expect further flooding, while other parts of the country suffer extensive drought.'

In a message to Bishops Andre Soares of Angola and Nathaniel Nakwatumbah of Namibia, Archbishop Makgoba said 'On behalf of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, I offer condolences to those who have lost loved ones. We assure them, and all who have been injured, or suffered loss through these floods, of our love and prayers.' He called on churches to give what support they could, in prayer, and in practical help, to those who had been affected.

The Archbishop added, 'I am reminded of the Biblical story of Noah and his ark. After the flood subsided, God made a covenant with all creation, promising never to destroy it again - a covenant based on the sanctity of life, the integrity of the created world, and the dignity of difference. Yet a covenant requires two parties, and it is for us, humanity, to play our part also in preserving human life, and protecting our environment, through differentiated approaches that allow each nation to pursue healthy and sustainable living for all its people.'

Referring to the global credit crunch, Archbishop Makgoba said 'The time has come for all of us to take stock. We can use the current crisis as an opportunity to create new international economic and environmental systems that overcome the injustices of the past, and promote best practices that will benefit not only the richest and most powerful, but also those in greatest need. And while we call on those who will meet in London next week to play their part, each one of us must do what we can to preserve our planet, and support those who are suffering hardship.'

Issued by the Office of the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town
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Note to editors - The Anglican Church of Southern Africa, which Archbishop Makgoba heads, encompasses Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, St Helena, South Africa, Swaziland and Tristan da Cunha.