

Heads bring security to climate talks

Title This post shares thoughts and experiences from the Climate Change Conference currently going on in Durban South Africa. It is the 17th Conference of Parties ? simply put, COP 17. The first week of the COP is dominated by discussions by technical people. They plough through volumes of documents; chapter by chapter and word for word, all in an attempt to build consensus. One of the key issues at this COP is whether to extend Kyoto Protocol or come up with a new agreement to regulate the amount of carbon dioxide countries may pump into the atmosphere. By the start of this second week they were still discussing and a deal did not seem close. The second week is the ?High Level Segment.? And you can be sure it is because the COP set up changes with government ministers, and sooner, Heads of State, taking over. At this point, you can touch the tension in the air with those who want a deal praying for a miracle before the end the week. Security arrangements are tighter with entrance to the negotiation halls being more tightly controlled. When you listen to COP participants, they keep saying ?we have now left it to the politicians? The big men also get involved in their side events involving the COP delegates. On Thursday, I received an invitation which made me blink. Among the listed panellists were six Heads of State, and here I was being casually invited. The gentleman who handed out the invite to me quipped: ?If all the big men would bring their security details, they would form enough quorum for the side event.? That aside, if you can get a Head of State to attend your event, you can be sure the press people will quickly pick it up.