

Addis Ababa, April 23,
2024

High-Level Panel 1: Stepping up ambition and innovative solutions to eradicate poverty and reinforce the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union

Comments by Dr. Mithika Mwenda, Executive Director, PACJA

Venue: United Nations Conference Centre, Banquet Hall

Chair: Minister of Hydraulics, Sanitation and the Environment, Niger, and Chair of the outgoing Bureau, Maizama Abdoulaye

Moderator: Journalist, Hannane Ferdjani

Keynote address on the second 10-year implementation plan of Agenda 2063, Deputy Chairperson, African Union Commission, Monique Nsanzabaganwa

Presentation on the highlights of the 2024 Africa Sustainable Development Report, focusing on innovative and transformative actions for integrated and accelerated implementation of the two agendas, Deputy Executive Secretary (Programme) and Chief Economist, ECA, Hanan Morsy

Acknowledgements to chair and co-panellists:

- Chair: Minister of Hydraulics, Sanitation and the Environment, Niger, and Chair of the outgoing Bureau, Maizama Abdoulaye
- Executive Secretary, ECA, Claver Gatete
- Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa, Cristina Duarte
- Chief Executive Officer, African Union Development Agency, Nardos Bekele-Thomas
- Executive Director, Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, Mithika Mwenda
- Group President and Managing Director, Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank, Admassu Tadesse

Key Talking points:

As an Introduction....

- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me pleasure to have this opportunity to share my reflection on these important subjects (eradicate poverty and reinforce the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063) and to reflect further on the presentation that has been shared by the Deputy Executive Secretary (Programme) and Chief Economist, ECA, Hanan Morsy

I am honoured to address you today at this critical event. As the Executive Director of the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), I would like to share our gratitude for the collaboration and engagement of UNECA, the African Union Commission, the Africa Development Bank, Pan-African Parliamentarians and other relevant institutions in advancing the agenda 2063 and realization of the SDGs.

*Addis Ababa, April 23,
2024*

SDGs and Agenda 2063 in the current geopolitics

- The current geopolitics presents both opportunities and constraints. Constraints linked to the diversion of resources from delivering the Agenda 2030 to fund wars in Ukraine-Russia, Israel-Hamas, and a host of false solutions to climate change. The global hypocrisy that characterises decisions on quick-term, self-centred interest of developed countries as opposed to funding transformative sustainable actions for the realization of sustainable development is apparent. African leadership must urgently seek their true north in this conundrum.
- The opportunities in these is presented by the space for Africa to forge new and meaningful partnerships that share the prospects for development, but these must be negotiated collectively by all African states.
- The key question remains on whether African political leadership can reposition the continent competitively in the current geo-politics to secure an edge in delivering agenda 2063.

Adaptation to climate change sits at the centre of delivering core transformations envisaged by the framers of Agenda 2030...

- We take stock of the significant relevance, at this hour of the role of adaptation in delivering virtually a majority of the goals envisaged under the SDGs framework
- Yet, adaptation and more so to African, and other less developed countries is not prioritised and remains largely underfunded. As such we must pursue a process that centres the Adaptation agenda in both the negotiations and crystalizing concrete pledges/ commitment with clear and easily accessible mechanisms for communities at the frontline of the climate crisis. Funding for the delivery of sustainable development must as such be complemented with sufficient climate funding to address incremental impacts of climate change.

Advancing for a true global partnership for a sustainable future

- This convening is perfectly aware of the limits to adaptation. We cannot pursue climate financing for the continent without sustaining a keen eye and boldly calling on our northern counterparts, the developed countries to cut on their emissions. Our call for the North to phase out of dirty, unabated fossil fuels should be louder and bolder, and with a further call on the political leadership across Africa to pursue this as an imperative for the continent's realization of the Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063.

*Addis Ababa, April 23,
2024*

- This calls for ambitious and binding emission reduction commitments from developed countries, adequate and predictable financial support for adaptation and mitigation actions in developing countries, technology transfer and capacity building, and a comprehensive and inclusive framework for addressing loss and damage. It is based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and supported by science.
- As PACJA and several Non-State Actors generally, we have a firm belief that our political leaders should not relent, nor spare any arsenal in exerting pressure on the global community to ensure SDGs are not another false start since that is where we could be heading. Nearly five years to the end of the Sustainable goals and as the world starts to explore the post-SDG landscape through the Summit of the future, the progress in realizing these frameworks is varied as the report that has been shared has just observed.
- At the core of the Summit of the future is addressing the global peace and security consideration, that is now compounded by climate insecurity, posing a layering challenge on silencing the guns by 2030. As PACJA we opine that investment in transformation adaptation actions that transfer power to communities at the frontline of climate crisis could provide a profound impact in this regard.
- A holistic approach to the development agenda in the continent will be important, otherwise the continent runs the risk of being treated as an experimental ground to provide for rationale for apparently visible impacts of underdevelopment and climate inaction.

False solutions are taking the continent aback in its 2063 agenda and SDGs

- Africa has been a ‘lucrative’ destination for carbon market investments. Unfortunately, Africa is yet to enjoy the dividends that come along with these investments. Indeed, the generosity of Africa to offset carbon emissions of our northern counterparts has been turned into a UNFCCC passport to pollute, impacting our people further and now most recently, as a super pathway for land grabs and human rights abuses for our people with far-reaching ramifications achieving SDG 1, (no Poverty) 2, (ending hunger) 5, (Gender equity) 13, (climate action) 16(peace and security)
- Whereas some African nations consider carbon markets as options for climate finance, our analysis is pointing to the contrary. An urgent departure from these markets is imperative. A cautious approach as we wean these markets out as means of financing climate action in the continent is important

*Addis Ababa, April 23,
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And, we have been complacent in our engagement with Global North or financial resources for delivering Agenda 2063 and securing a climate-just world...

- Drawing from available statistics, it's clear that climate finance needs are in the range of USD trillions, not billions as we have been pushing. PACJA as the leading luminary of the African CSOs voice is conscious of the grave challenges facing financing climate response in Africa. We are particularly concerned about the meagre climate finance overall reaching the continent, and more importantly, the funding that Africa is receiving to support the adaptation agenda.
- More so, double counting of disbursements has continued to deny the continent the much-needed funding for scaling climate action.

Do our resources, including the critical minerals count in delivering our vision?

- Agenda 2063 envisaged formulation of the African commodities strategy to enable African countries to add value, extract higher rents from their commodities and integrate into global value chains. Our progress as a continent, as well as the genuine interest of our partners in the global north in this aspiration, must be interrogated.
- It's now over 14 years since the adoption of the African Mining Vision and efforts to adopt this ambitious framework at the country level remain elusive as the extraction of African resources continues unchecked
- As matters stand, we have no concrete framework as a continent for securing our critical minerals resources for our green growth and transition to low-carbon economies, in spite of us having the AU Green Recovery Strategy
- Equally, as a continent, we may not have up to point inventory of how much mineral resources we have concessioned out to other countries and claim on our sovereignty as nations continue to hamper our strive for collective development, through regional industrialization blocks.
- Much more worse is the limited investments in developing technologies needed in renewable investments in spite of the continent possessing all mineral resources needed for the transition. The resource curse continue to manifest, in this regard.

Debt question:

- This forum has the pressing task of explaining how best governments in Africa can deliver on the transformative promises of SDGs and Agenda 2063 under the weight of immoral debt. The initial pronouncement for transforming the global financial architecture must be followed with concrete actions including transforming multilateral funding arrangements under UNFCCC which are more bureaucratic than the World Bank itself.

What is Africa's space in innovations, and where are the homegrown solutions? When do African innovations become true innovations and what is the investment by African governments in advancing these innovations?

- Investments in Africa-led research and innovations coupled with a decolonial approach to advancing innovations is a priority

And where is our true north, the ideology guiding our strive?

- As we explore measures to enhance our ambition and innovations we must undertake a honest stock-take on our actions in implementing Agenda 2063 and the agenda 2030. We must introspect on whether we are ***guided by a clear ideology or whether these two agendas are just mere blueprints for the continent.*** We must seek to ask whether Africa is united a coherent whole in pursuing these agenda items and question the growing restrictive measures that limit prospects for coherent action in pursuit of a united continent in pursuit of ideology-driven development.

As CSO fraternity we shall discharge our solemn duty in observing the process, sharing necessary intelligence with all African governments without fear or favour and providing progressive positions and perspectives on how to achieve the SDGs, Agenda 2063 and ambitious climate ambition in the continent.

We have the conviction that history will be on our side.

I thank you all.