



THIRD PAN AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS SUMMIT ON CLIMATE POLICY AND EQUITY

May, 16 – 17, 2023, Pan African Parliament, Midrand, South Africa

WELCOME REMARKS BY DR. MITHIKA MWENDA, PACJA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DURING THE SPECIAL SESSION WITH H.E WILLIAM RUTO, THE PRESIDENT OF
KENYA AND CAHOSCC CHAIR

Thank you, Your Excellency Chief Fortune Charumbira,

**You Excellency, Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development,
Blue economy and Sustainable development of the African Union;**

All protocols observed;

Excellency;

This Summit is hosted jointly by the Pan African Parliament and the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, and brings together PAP members, but beyond that, it also draws delegates from individual National Assemblies committees responsible for environment from all countries. Delegations from parliaments of the Regional Economic Integration Communities here:

- Economic Commission of West African States
- Parliament of Economic Commission of Central African States
- East African Legislative Assembly
- SADC Parliamentary Forum

There are also individual parliamentary networks such as Pan African Parliamentarians Network on Climate Change associated with Africa-Caribbean Pacific Network, the African Climate Legislation Initiative, and, the African

Parliamentarians for Climate Action. We also joined by representatives from the European Union Parliament, further afield from Latin America, Representatives from Governments, Intergovernmental Institutions, civil society and other Groups.

Yesterday was a moment of reflection, where delegates heard from experts about the latest science and were updated about the prevailing geopolitical context, defined by, in addition to the climate crisis, other lingering global crises such as COVID-19, the biodiversity loss, the Russia-Ukraine War, skyrocketing food crisis, cost-of-living crisis and the deepening debt crisis threatening to reverse all global efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

Throughout the day, Delegates shared perspectives, exchanged ideas and experiences on the international climate policy processes, both in their countries and globally, and came to the near consensus that a new paradigm is required to energise the conversations on climate change.

It was observed that more than 3 decades of discussions under the auspices of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change have resulted in fatigue across the board, and many stakeholders are concerned about endless Conferences, which have become a ritual, with predictable declarations, decisions, resolutions, communique – which remain on Paper without implementation.

And seven years after the historic Paris Agreement was adopted, the Global Stock-take moment informs us on whether we are on the right track or not. Delegates also expressed concerns about the disconnect that exists between the policy frameworks we adopt, and their implementation. If we have been remaining faithful to all the decisions passed in COPs and other related processes, we should not be talking about the failure of policies!

This year's theme, "***A Continent at the Crossroads: Graceful Just Transition and NDC Implementation Responsive to African Development Aspirations and economic realities***", gives us a moment of pause and reflection, in interrogating ourselves on whether it makes sense to make countless decisions, declarations and commitments that just remain in Paper.

This is what brings us to the crossroads.

- The crossroads of development, and the crossroads of balancing the same with the desire to combat climate crisis.
- The crossroads of remaining in the current unsustainable modes of production and consumption, which has led us to where we are now, and adopting new

development pathways that may have an impact on our current growth paths, but direct us towards a zero-carbon future – and bequeath a habitable future to the generations to come.

- The crossroads of abandoning the vast fossil fuel resources underneath our soils, and the crossroads of exploiting the resources to power our people out of energy poverty and hunger.

And, your Excellency, delegates were wondering whether this Summit, together with the Africa Climate Action Summit you will be hosting in Nairobi later in September, will join the catalogue of any other conferences, laced with flowery resolutions, only to just end as such - declarations. The mood here is that there is general inertia in all our global efforts to combat climate change, and a new way of doing things should be explored.

Delegates are eager to hear from you, as their leader, as the Coordinator of the Committee of Heads of State and Government on Climate Change, **THE PLANET AT THE CROSSROADS:**

Graceful just transition and NDCs implementation responsive to African development aspirations and economic realities to understand what tactics we are going to collectively deploy to rally the African people around a common agenda that will change our attitude, and the attitude of others towards us, to be seen not as victims of all crises, but solution providers.

For more than a decade since the demise of the founder of CAHOSSC, Ethiopian former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in 2011, Africa has lacked a titular figure to rally around, reminiscent of the 2009 Copenhagen Moment. We are confident that the watershed moment provided by the ongoing Global Stocktake process, and your emphatic reinvigoration of CAHOSSC, rekindles that 2009 nostalgia, and your leadership will no doubt inspire all of us – men and women, the youth and the aged, smallholder farmers, parliamentarians, indigenous peoples - to rise to the occasion and contribute our fair share in ensuring Africa becomes, yet again, a formidable force in shaping the future we desire, and an international climate action framework that is responsive to the continent's aspirations and realities. More importantly, we are keen on the agenda we have to tap into youth energy and innovation, and to that end, we are working with Universities to train them to understand the intricacies of the climate conundrum, under the auspices of

Nairobi Summer School on Climate Justice taking place at Kenyatta University, which has attracted 2000 applicants from 72 Countries across the World.

We thus see you as a General in a battlefield, and ourselves as your foot soldiers. As your brave soldiers, PAP and PACJA, together with regional parliaments and individual networks PAPNCC and APCA, as well as other initiatives across the continent, will harm ourselves through PAP's Clarion Call of One Africa, one voice as our ammunition. We have battalions of highly-trained experts within our institutions and think tanks, under the auspices of the Climate Change and Development for Africa (ClimDev-Africa) Initiative, mandated by the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, which will back you with all analysis and persuasions. Fragmentation of our efforts, based on regions, sectors and language has remained Africa's biggest challenge to attain a strong voice in international climate dialogue processes.

Our task is thus to ensure that, under your leadership, Africa speaks with one voice, and as we gather momentum towards the *Africa Climate Action Summit*, all delegates from this Summit will commit to be champions of our clarion call in their Assemblies, countries and outreaches.

Your Excellency, this is your session, and I don't want to take long as the delegates are waiting in bated breath to hear from you. Allow me, however, to mention that the severity of the climate crisis which has put our continent on the cross-roads highlights, among other challenges:

- The need to uphold the primacy of adaptation as the utmost priority for the African continent and its people, both as science demands, and as an imperative of climate justice.
- The need to ignite broad discussion on the global goal of adaptation, adequate finance for adaptation and resilience building for communities at the frontline of the climate crisis
- The need to strengthen the policy and legislative frameworks for climate action in Africa, particularly, adaptation and resilience-building, drawing on the specifics of our context and the best practices and experiences of other regions and countries.

- The need to enhance the oversight and accountability functions of parliamentarians in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of policy frameworks and commitments, both at the national and continental levels, as well as ensuring that they have aligned with the respective Countries national sustainable development blueprints, the Paris Agreement, African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The need to engage with, and empower local communities, especially women, youth, farmers, and other vulnerable groups, who are most affected by climate change impacts and have valuable knowledge and solutions to offer.
- The need to seize the opportunity that climate change offers to transform our agricultural systems and practices towards more sustainable and resilient models that can reduce emissions, enhance adaptation, and improve livelihoods.
- The need to strengthen strong collaboration with other non-state Actors such as civil society, the private sector, academia and media to raise awareness and mobilize support for climate action, illustrated by this Summit which is hosted jointly between PACJA and PAP.

Thank you, and welcome, your Excellency.