

Libreville, February 26, 2023

Speech of the President of Political and Technical Affairs of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) at the One Forest Youth Forum 2023 on the theme: "Youth facing the challenges of forest ecosystem development" (Libreville-Gabon/27 - 28 February 2023)

Libreville, February 27, 2023 (Boulevard Hotel)

Mr. Prime Minister of the Gabonese Republic ;

Mr. Minister of Youth and Sports ;

Madam Minister of Forest Economy, Sustainable Development and Environment of the Republic of Congo (DRC);

Mr. President of the ECCAS Commission;

Mr. Ambassador of France to Gabon ;

Mr. UNICEF Representative ;

Mr. Director General of the National Employment Promotion Pole (Gabon) ;

Mr. General Director of Youth ;

Representatives of the Technical and Financial Partners;

Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations

Government, Private Sector and Civil Society;

Distinguished Guests ;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Dear young people ;

It is an honor to stand before you this Monday, February 27, 2023, as Co-Founder and President of Political and Technical Affairs of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) in the context of the first edition of the One Forest Youth Forum whose theme is: ***"Youth facing the challenges of forest ecosystem development"***.

Because this forum is in line with the spirit of the Convergence Plan on sustainable forest management and the involvement of young people in environmental issues, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) encourages this initiative, which is being held as a prelude to the One Forest Summit, which will bring together African heads of state and **French President Emmanuel Macron** to discuss issues of preservation and sustainable management of tropical forests.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Dear young people,

Climate change is the greatest challenge facing humanity in the last three decades. The threat posed by global warming to human societies and ecosystems is growing. The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has just confirmed the seriousness of this threat by stating that climate change is likely to produce severe and irreversible adverse effects.

Despite the tiny contribution of the African continent to greenhouse gas emissions (4%), Africans are suffering the full force of the adverse effects of climate change. Drought, flooding, famine have become their daily life. To face this, African youth are mobilizing to carry out awareness, education and training actions that should reduce the impact of climate change on the future of Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Dear young people,

We are aware of the dynamism of young people in the 21st century and we thought that one of the best ways to deal with environmental and climate issues is without hesitation to involve young people, public decision-makers, all social strata through concrete actions, including training, experience sharing, awareness raising etc.

It is with this in mind that the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) has implemented several initiatives to unite youth around issues related to climate change, sustainable development, sustainable forest management and many others. These include

- **The Climate Justice Torch Campaign** is a PACJA initiative that aims to engage the African public and bring together diverse African voices for a common goal:
- **The Nairobi Summer School** for Climate Justice which educates both passionate stakeholders and young climate activists by giving them more knowledge about climate change and providing them with practical skills to fight for climate justice on a global scale;
- **The Young Digital Activities (YDA) program** developed by PACJA aims to involve young people who are very active in digital awareness via social networks on issues of climate change, sustainable development etc.

A young person who has been trained or sensitized by his dynamism and his ability to grasp the concepts can be the focal point who will relay the information and contribute to a change of mentality in his community.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Dear young people,

One of the issues that also brings us together today is the question of sustainable management of tropical forests.

Indeed, industrial logging, the large-scale extraction of trees in tropical forests is a major cause of forest loss. The current devastation of the forests of Africa, Asia, South and Central America is directly associated with the demand of distant markets, mainly in industrialized countries, where the wood of a handful of tropical species is sold at high prices.

Contrary to what most governments and logging companies say, logging does not lead to sustainable improvements in local welfare. Impoverishment and social disintegration are the most common consequences of large-scale logging, whose activities are often centered on corruption.

Women and youth are often disproportionately affected, as the forest products they traditionally use and manage disappear with the forest. For this reason, we advocate for an economic development based on a sustainable exploitation of renewable resources without damage to the environment and future generations.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Dear young people,

We know that illegal logging and forest degradation are serious threats to natural ecosystems, to local communities, to forest-dependent populations and to their representatives, who are mainly youth. The young people suffer from the floods caused by the destruction of mangroves, the advance of the sea, the rise of water, and the destruction of the coastal resilience. As you have understood, it becomes crucial that the adaptation of forest ecosystems be at the heart of our concerns in order to reduce the

negative impacts of climate change that would help young people to seize green job opportunities with positive impacts. That is why, on behalf of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, I call for an inclusive youth initiative on forests and adaptation here and now. On the subject of adaptation, we note that it has always been a priority for Africa, but unfortunately until now it has not always had the attention of the authorities, especially with regard to its financing. Yet in 2015, the Paris Agreement created the **Global Goal on Adaptation with the** aim of leading a collective action on adaptation. This should be the counterpart of the objective to limit the global temperature below 2C in order to go towards equality with the global mitigation ambitions.

At COP26, countries established the two-year Glasgow-Sharm el-Sheikh Global Target for Adaptation (GlaSS) work program to enhance and support adaptation action through a country-driven process. Given the rapid acceleration of climate hazards around the world, the GGA needs to be defined as a matter of urgency and must be informed by local climate risks, solutions, and adaptation limitations.

This is why we believe that the funding for adaptation should be doubled as promised in Glasgow and even tripled. And by 2025 we want the world's leaders to tell us what will be done to address this major concern.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Dear young people,

I remain convinced that our involvement, each in our own field and at our own level of responsibility, will allow us to capture all the knowledge to better take measures to adapt to climate change and enable young people to face the challenges of developing forest ecosystems.

The Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) remains ready to work with governments, youth, women, the private sector, and civil society organizations to act together to save our planet.

I wish you all good work, and a very good capitalization of the results that will come from it.

Thank you !!!!