

## AFRICA CLIMATE SUMMIT – OPENING SESSION

### Remarks by Dr Mithika Mwenda, Executive Director, PACJA

**Dear Excellencies, distinguished delegates, and respected guests allow me to stand by existing Protocols;**

It is with great honour that I address you today first as the Executive Director of the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance representing African Civil Society, and secondly wearing the hat of the larger Non-State Actors Committee for the Africa Climate Summit, which has been meeting since the announcement of the Summit during the 36th AU Summit in February.

As we gather here in Nairobi for the inaugural Africa Climate Summit, I can't help but feel the weight of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

For many years, the climate change negotiations under UNFCCC have remained a contestation between North and South, with deepening mistrust, and widening divide between North and South about two actions that should reverse the impacts of the challenge that poses an existential threat to the survival of humanity and the planet; adaptation and mitigation.

The outcomes of this Summit, then, should seek to not only provide a neutral ground for conversation, and restore hope and dignity for millions of people whose livelihoods have been turned upside down due to raging climate impacts manifested by shifting seasons, drying rivers, erratic rainfall, diseases, compounding food crisis, and false solutions, but should also be responsive to African peoples' realities, aspirations, desires and imperatives of climate justice.

Top of these should be adaptation – underpinned by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It is not just about coping with the impacts of climate change but also about enhancing our solidarity-in-prosperity, and resilience, reducing our risks, and seizing our opportunities.

Yes, Africa, with the most progressive position in the international dialogue process, has pronounced itself on what we require in adaptation and mitigation, and all studies show that we are doing more than our fair share in the global efforts to combat climate change.

Africa needs USD 160-340 billion annually by 2030 for adaptation, while the current flows are only around USD 16 billion annually, a fraction of the annual budget for some blue-chip companies and foundations attending this Summit.

We need a deep conversation on how to address this, including achieving balanced financing between adaptation and mitigation, as delaying action now will result in exponential costs in the future.

This Summit should also convey a bold, unequivocal message from Africa that it is not a forum to aid the industrialised countries to escape their historical and current responsibilities and transfer of burden of action to the victims of their actions, but a platform to once again renew our call to honour their commitments on deep and genuine emissions cuts and adequate support to vulnerable countries and communities adequately, the majority in Africa.

As We extend the hand of partnership and take the front seat in the inevitable transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient, fair, equitable and ecologically just development pathways, we should also seek to change the narratives and seek reciprocal actions from our partners in the North, and urge them not to shift the goal-posts as they have done before.

We have the critical natural resources, including vast renewables and minerals, which will drive this transition. How to exploit these resources should be the conversation we should have. How we leverage them will determine whether we repeat the curse of the minerals driving the carbon-addicted industrial revolution – fossil fuels – which has brought us the current challenges – or we will choose to start We have a unique opportunity to shape our future in a resilient, prosperous, inclusive and fair way.

This is not the time to test solutions that are wanting both in their conceptualisation and potential benefits.

**Thank you for your attention.**