



REMARKS FOR THE 12TH CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA (CCDA-XII)

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Distinguished Guests, Esteemed Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to stand by the existing Protocol;

Once again, let me start by expressing my sincere gratitude to ECA, AUC and AfDB for anchoring the voice of the civil society as a major partner in this ClimDev Africa Initiative, and, with that, mention that it is an honour to be with you today at this all-important 12th Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-XII). We gather at a time when the stakes have never been higher for our continent.

The theme of this conference, "Financing Climate Adaptation in Africa," resonates deeply with the urgent challenges we face. The devastating impacts of climate change are being felt across Africa with increasing severity, threatening our economies, ecosystems, and communities. We must act decisively, not just in response to these challenges but in shaping a future where our continent thrives despite them.

This year, we stand on the threshold of a critical juncture in international climate discourse process. As we look towards COP 29 in November, it is imperative that Africa speaks with one voice, demanding the justice and support we need to confront the climate crisis head-on. The conclusions of the Global Stock Take (GST) at COP28 painted a sobering picture: the world is off track in meeting the 1.5 degrees Celsius goal set under the Paris Agreement. This shortfall is not just a failure of policy; it is a failure that puts lives, livelihoods, and the future of our children, as well as the health of the planet at risk.

Africa, as we know, is a minor emitter of greenhouse gases, yet we are disproportionately bearing the brunt of global emissions. The consequences of climate change are decimating our lands, from the rising seas that threaten coastal communities to the persistent droughts that ravage our agriculture and our traditional ways of life. The escalating climate-induced displacement, with millions forced to leave their homes due to flooding and storms, and climate-inspired conflicts, is a stark reminder that we are on the frontlines of a battle we did not start. But we must not face this crisis alone.

The need for climate adaptation in Africa is urgent and undeniable. Yet, the financial resources required to achieve this adaptation and resilience-building remain elusive. Though only putatively reached, the \$100 billion per year pledge made in 2009 falls woefully short of the estimated \$1.3 trillion required. The gap between what is needed and what is provided continues to grow, undermining our efforts to build resilience, create jobs, and foster green growth.

As the Global Goal on Adaptation is being negotiated, I want to emphasise the importance of needs-based financing. Africa's adaptation needs are unique and significant, driven by the continent's particular vulnerabilities to climate change. We cannot afford a one-size-fits-all approach. Financing must be tailored to the specific challenges faced by our communities, ensuring that funds reach those who need them most and are used effectively to build resilience and protect livelihoods. This is not just a matter of justice; it is a matter of survival.

Africa's vast carbon sinks, particularly in the Congo Basin, represent a significant opportunity for green finance through carbon markets. However, these markets – highly romanticised in Africa as a major source of climate finance - remain underdeveloped and misunderstood on our continent, leaving us without the compensation that is rightfully ours for the ecological services we provide. We must work together to unlock these resources' potential, if they exist, ensuring that Africa receives fair compensation for its contributions to global carbon sequestration.

Moreover, we must recognize the vital role that Africa's critical minerals play in driving the global energy transition. Minerals such as cobalt, lithium, and rare earth elements are

essential for the production of batteries, electric vehicles, and renewable energy technologies. Africa holds a significant share of these resources, and we must leverage this advantage to drive the industrialization and development of our continent. However, this must be done through local value addition, ensuring that the benefits of these resources are retained within Africa, creating jobs, building infrastructure, and fostering sustainable economic growth. We cannot allow our resources to be extracted and exported without deriving full value from them.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we convene here in Abidjan, we have a unique opportunity to shape Africa's position ahead of COP 29. We must push for the full realization of the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance, demand faster technology transfer, and finalize the rules governing carbon markets. The upcoming Conference of Parties must address the outstanding issues of adaptation financing, loss and damage, and ensure that Africa's needs are met.

The challenges are formidable, but so too are the opportunities. By scaling up climate action, particularly at the intersection of climate and biodiversity, we can unlock new avenues for sustainable development. We can and must lead the way in creating a future where Africa's cities, communities, and ecosystems are resilient and thriving.

As the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance, we are committed, as usual, to doing our part, but we have conviction that working with others assures us of quicker victories – and that is the spirit of this multistakeholder platform, ClimDev-Africa.

Ahead of this Conference, we hosted a series of pre-events bringing together participants working in various intersections of climate action. We convened stakeholders to examine the challenges and opportunities for financing adaptation, foster collaborations on advancing a narrative on needs-based financing of adaptation, and explore strategies for leveraging Africa's critical minerals wealth to advance its development, interrogating the role of parliamentarians in Africa's climate conversations, among others. These pre-events allowed us to reflect on the crucial issues that must be considered to solve the climate crisis, and we look forward to sharing perspectives from these crucial pre-events during the CCDA.

Remember that the African people are counting on us to provide lasting solutions to our mounting challenges and are calling for action. A new study that has just been released by research body, Afrobarometer finds that a significant number of citizens are not aware of climate change, though those familiar with the subject “want their governments to invest in climate-resilient infrastructure, solar and wind energy in response to changing weather patterns and environmental degradation.” We can expect people from every corner of the continent to put pressure on governments and other actors if we fail to take the actions that are required to improve things.

As we proceed with the discussions over the next few days leading to the Africa Ministerial Conference on the Environment, let us be guided by a spirit of unity and determination. In a year when we are not going to have the Africa Climate Week, we should turn Abidjan a moment where, in spite of resource constraints as we were told by UNFCCC Secretariat, our voices, experiences, and solutions must shape the global climate agenda.

Together, we can forge a path that not only addresses the challenges of today but also lays the foundation for a prosperous, resilient Africa.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and look forward to the outcomes of this vital conference.

Thank you.