

AFRICA CLIMATE SUMMIT-II NON-STATE ACTORS MEETING

May 15, 2025 – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Welcome statement by Dr. Mithika Mwenda

Executive Director, Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA)

Your Excellencies, State Minister, Seyoum Mekonnen, State Minister, Climate Change and Demography, Ministry of Planning and Development, Federal Republic of Ethiopia;

Dr. Jihanne El Gaouzi..., Division Head, Sustainable Environment, African Union COMmission;

HE Adam Drury, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to FDRE and Permanent Rep to AU;

HE Ruslan Nasbov, Azerbaijan Permanent Rep to African Union;

Rose Marie Arvid Larsen, Counsellor, Embassy of Denmark

Arina Hohn, Deputy Permanent Observer to Africa Union, Embassy of German

HE Deputy Ambassador, Denmark;

Dr. Asmany Asfour, President, Africa Private Sector and Chair of FEMNET

Distinguished guests, comrades in the struggle for climate justice, friends and allies,

We gather here in Addis Ababa, not just to kickstart preparatory process of the second Africa Climate Summit, but to make a statement—a statement that African non-state actors – including civil society, indigenous people, women, farmers groups, youth, NGOs and community-based organisations - are not passengers on this journey. We are navigators, architects, and watchdogs of the integrity of Africa's climate discourse processes, and we want to be counted in the ensuing conversations on the Africa's foremost convergence in the search for the solutions in tackling the most pressing issue of our times.

Let us begin by being honest with ourselves. The Africa Climate Summit, as convened in Nairobi last year, was both a milestone and a missed opportunity. Yes, it showed the power of African convening. Yes, it opened doors for engagement. But it also raised serious concerns about whose vision of Africa's future was being advanced.

The original framing leaned dangerously toward market mechanisms and technocratic fixes, sidelining the people's agenda—adaptation, loss and damage, energy access, and a graceful just transition rooted in equity and justice.

It took the organising power, solidarity and protest by African non-state actors—Indigenous communities, women, youth, faith leaders, workers, and civil society—to push back and demand that the Summit reflect not what external financiers wanted but what Africans *needed*. And we must do so again—this time louder, smarter, more united, but more importantly, in solidarity with our partners, starting with the Co-hosts of ACS-II, the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the African Union Commission.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We live in a world where Africa contributes the least to climate change but suffers the most; where the Global North has racked up a climate debt of over 100 trillion dollars and yet offers us loans instead of justice; where adaptation finance is slow, insufficient, and inaccessible while fossil fuel investments quietly expand; and where the civic space is shrinking, even as the climate crisis deepens the vulnerabilities of our communities.

Comrades,

This is the polycrisis era: a convergence of global disorder, ecological collapse, economic injustice, and democratic backsliding. Our response must be intersectional, global in solidarity, and unapologetically Pan-African.

The Addis convening must therefore achieve five things:

1. **First**, it must reclaim the Africa Climate Summit as a people's summit, not a carbon market and false solutions fair. We must define the agenda, not react to it. That means centring adaptation, loss and damage, and just transition as non-negotiables.
2. **Second**, we must demand a new financing compact, rooted in justice, not charity. Climate finance must be predictable, accessible, grant-based, and aligned with national and local priorities. Loans are not solutions; they are shackles.
3. **Third**, we must unify African non-state actors into a powerful, organised constituency that is present at every negotiation table. Fragmentation is our enemy; unity is our superpower.
4. **Fourth**, we must build bridges across movements—climate, debt, economic justice, gender, and food sovereignty. Our struggles are connected, and so must our strategies.

5. **Fifth**, we must meaningfully engage with institutions—the African Union, UNECA, and national governments—not as token participants but as equal partners with expertise, legitimacy, and vision.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear Comrades,

Let me be clear: we are not here to rubber-stamp anyone's agenda. We are here to build a roadmap for ACS-II that reflects African realities and priorities—one that does not commodify our forests, auction our lands, or greenwash the exploitation of our critical minerals.

We are here to insist that climate action in Africa must mean *energy for people, not for profit; resilience for communities, not just for economies; and justice for the present, not just promises for the future.*

This is our moment. Let Addis mark not just the beginning of another Summit—but the resurgence of African people's leadership in shaping the future of climate diplomacy.

I urge you to speak boldly, organize relentlessly, and collaborate strategically. Let us leave this convening not just with declarations but with mechanisms, not just with hope but with plans, not just with unity in purpose but unity in action.

Thank you.