



For Immediate Release

African Youth Take Centre Stage at the Fifth International Symposium on Climate Justice Ahead of Africa Climate II

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – 25 August, 2025: The Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, in Partnership with Addis Ababa University, hosted the fifth international symposium on Climate Change, opening the 5th cohort of Nairobi Summer School on Climate Justice (NSSCJ).

Running under the theme: **Aspiring a livable Future: youth-led Transformation in the Poly-crisis era**”, the symposium was graced by Her Excellency Dr. Fitsum Assefa, the Minister of Planning and Development of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, alongside diplomats, other development partners, Civil society, academia, and youth.

Africa is bearing the adverse impacts of Climate Change, yet it emits 4% of global emissions. The climate-related hazards continue to cost African economies between 2 -5% of GDP annually. While collective climate action efforts are needed, the symposium highlighted the role of African youth in shaping solutions to the continent amid the escalating climate crisis.

Her Excellency Dr. Fitsum Assefa, the Minister of Planning and Development of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, reminded that a livable future is possible when the continent remains focused. She called on Africa to advocate for itself instead of waiting for others to act at its expense. *“We will not sit back and wait for the world to respond—we shall act, and act now. Africa must take its rightful place in global finance, in international architecture, and across all sectors. A livable future is possible if we act with purpose and courage.”* Said H.E. Dr. Fitsum Assefa

She added, *“We know strategies and programmes alone are not enough. It is the creativity, passion and courage of young people that will carry us forward. The Nairobi Summer School on Climate Justice is a powerful testament to this truth”*.

Ayelele Kabede, Programme Manager of the regional development cooperation, SIDA, stated that the challenges of climate change are intricate and interconnected. Therefore, addressing them requires anticipating changes and envisioning multiple futures.

“Future thinking is not about predicting the future with certainty but rather about broadening our understanding of what is possible, plausible, probable and preferable,” stressed Ayele Kabede



In the global arena call for youth inclusion in the climate conversation has been a central point of discussion. Sebastian Lukas, deputy head of Mission, Danish embassy in Ethiopia, challenged governments to shift the narrative and give youth space in negotiating spaces.

“Governments must do more than just talk about youth inclusion. They must take time to listen and ensure that youth voices are represented in negotiations,” said Sebastian Lukas.

Dr Mithika Mwenda, Executive Director of PACJA, said that no one should ignore the current polycrisis challenges and recommended youth as a hope for present and future generations.

“The threat is clear: a climate system that is spiralling out of control, along with increasing global inequalities, wars, pandemics, and economic shocks that are undermining societies. Yet, there is hope in the audacity of African youth, the bravery of social movements, and the solidarity of communities that refuse to surrender their future to despair,” said Dr Mithika Mwenda.

Being conceptualised in 2021, the Nairobi Summer School on Climate Justice has trained over 2,000 youth from all countries on the continent, including those from Asia, South America, and Europe. It was designed to provide a timely opportunity for long-standing scholar-activists, community-based scholars and the younger generation of climate justice advocates, as well as practitioners from the Global South and North.

During the intensive two weeks of training, over 250 learners will follow modules to be delivered in Hybrid (physical and virtual learning format blended with various learning approaches, including lectures, presentations, case studies, audio-visual media, facilitated discussions, group exercises, and field visits.

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