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**OPENING STATEMENT**

**H.E. Moses Valakati,**

**Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and  
Sustainable Environment**

**On the occasion of the**

**7th Africa Climate Talks (ACT-7)**

**AT**

**United Nations Conference Centre**

**30 April 2026/ 9:00 - 9:45 am**

**UNECA, Addis Ababa**

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( PROTOCOL)

**Your Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. It is a great honour to address you at the Seventh Africa Climate Talks (ACTS-7) here in Addis Ababa. I commend UNECA, in collaboration with all ClimDev-Africa partners—the African Union Commission, African Development Bank and Afreximbank—for convening this timely and strategic forum, which continues to strengthen Africa’s collective climate leadership.
2. This year’s Africa Climate Talks take place under the **African Union Theme of the Year on Water**, underscoring a reality Africa knows all too well: climate change is fundamentally a water crisis. Across our continent, water scarcity, floods, droughts, declining water quality, and growing competition over shared water systems are threatening food security, energy systems, ecosystems and peace.

**Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

3. Convening ACTS-7 back-to-back with the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development underscores the critical role of the ARFSD as Africa’s principal intergovernmental platform for reviewing progress on Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, including climate action, water security, food systems and resilience.
4. We meet at a decisive moment for the global response to climate change. The test before us is no longer the ambition of our declarations, but the credibility of implementation. The emissions gap is widening, climate impacts are intensifying, and confidence in international commitments is under strain.
5. Africa stands at the centre of this test. Our continent has contributed least to the climate crisis yet remains among the most affected. At the same time, Africa holds immense assets for a global just transition: vast renewable energy potential, critical minerals, carbon-rich ecosystems, a dynamic youth population, and an increasingly coherent political voice.

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**Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

6. Africa's hosting of COP32 here in Addis Ababa will be of historic significance. It must be more than symbolic; it must demonstrate Africa's capacity to lead on implementation, accountability and solutions.
7. In this regard, the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) continues to provide indispensable strategic leadership for Africa's climate agenda, strengthening unity, credibility and visibility in global climate processes.
8. Equally critical is the role of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) as the backbone of Africa's technical and negotiating strength. The African Union Commission reaffirms its commitment to working closely with the AGN, alongside ECA and partners, to ensure sustained technical backstopping, evidence-based positions and coordinated preparation toward COP31 in Türkiye and COP32 in Addis Ababa, guided by the political direction of CAHOSCC and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN).
9. Over recent years, Africa Climate Summits, CCDAs and engagement at UNFCCC COPs have consolidated a justice-centred African climate agenda. Yet they have also revealed persistent gaps between commitments and delivery, particularly on adaptation finance, capitalization of the Loss and Damage Fund, and fulfilment of obligations under Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement.

**Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

10. The task before ACTS-7 is therefore clear. First, political signals must be translated into concrete implementation frameworks. Outcomes of ACS2, CCDA-XIII and COP30 should be distilled into a coherent African roadmap toward COP31 and COP32, with clear priorities, responsibilities and timelines.
11. The Global Stocktake must be transformed into an African NDC 3.0 agenda. For Africa, ambition must advance development. NDCs should expand access to clean energy, climate-resilient food systems, sustainable land and water management, biodiversity protection, blue economy assets and decent green jobs for youth.

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Allow me to point out that one of the priorities in my 100 days rolling plan since assuming office as Commissioner ARBE is the creation of sustainable jobs for the youth and climate resilient Agriculture.

**Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

12. On climate Finance, Africa must secure predictable, scaled and accessible climate finance, particularly for adaptation and loss and damage. This requires reform of the international financial architecture, expanded concessional and blended finance, and simplified access modalities that ensure resources reach frontline communities. We must commend countries that have pioneered initiatives such as the Seychelles Blue Bonds and the ongoing efforts by different countries to champion the reforms of the financial architecture.
13. In addition, Africa must shape just transition pathways and carbon market participation on its own terms. The African Union is in the process of operationalizing the Africa Action Plan on Carbon Markets (AAPCM) The AAPCM was endorsed by the AU in 2025 as a living document to guide member states on carbon market governance, aligned with the Paris Agreement and AU climate strategies.

**Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

14. A hungry man is an Angry Man - food security and agrifood systems transformation must be central to Africa's climate response. Climate change is already undermining productivity and increasing hunger. The Kampala CAADP Declaration (2026–2035) offers a strong continental framework for resilient, inclusive and sustainable agrifood systems, aligned with climate adaptation, water security and nutrition. Its full integration into climate planning and financing is imperative.
15. Finally, Africa must engage proactively in the emerging trade–climate agenda. New border measures, standards and green industrial policies must not become barriers to African exports or industrialisation, but rather support sustainable value chains, regional integration and climate-compatible industrial development under the AfCFTA.

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16. The Africa Climate Talks exist precisely to meet these challenges—bringing together negotiators, policymakers, experts, civil society, the private sector, youth and academia to forge a unified African voice grounded in science, institutional alignment and implementation.

**Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,**

17. Decisions taken on the road to COP31 and COP32 will determine whether Africa's farmers, pastoralists, fishers, women and youth face deepening vulnerability or new pathways to resilience, productivity and prosperity.

18. I therefore urge the Seventh Africa Climate Talks to be bold, practical and forward-looking. The African Union Commission, together with ClimDev-Africa partners, RECs and Member States, stands ready to support the follow-up to your work.

19. Let us seize this opportunity to send a clear signal: that when the world gathers in Addis Ababa for COP32, Africa will come not only with expectations, but with a credible implementation agenda and as a leader.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

20. I thank you all for your kind attention and look forward to fruitful deliberations and concrete outcomes.