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FROM PLEDGES TO IMPLEMENTATION:

AFRICAN AGENCY AND THE BELÉM–ANTALYA–ADDIS ROADMAP

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“Climate leadership is not simply asking for a better global system. It is building one.”

THE ARGUMENT, NOT THE ORNAMENT

“Mr. Chairman, Africa has come of age … The fortunes of Africa are in our hands to make or mar.”

— General Murtala Muhammed, Addis Ababa, 11 January 1976, OAU Extraordinary Summit

Fifty years on, that charge is the argument of this presentation, not its ornament. Africa's climate future will not be granted by pledges made elsewhere, nor rescued by interventions we wait for. It will be built, financed, governed and defended by Africans, on terms Africa itself has written.

Whenever the continent has waited for outside validation, progress has been slow and conditional. Where it has moved first — in advancing independence for African countries, in markets, in institutions, in the very map by which the world sees us — it has changed outcomes.

APPRECIATION & BACKGROUND

A Continental Conversation, at a Consequential Moment

It is an honour to participate in this all-important continental conversation at a time when Africa's climate and developmental choices are becoming increasingly consequential — building on the African Leaders' Addis Ababa Declaration, adopted on the premise that Africa is “not here to beg” but here with solutions.

A LEGISLATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Sponsor of Nigeria's Climate Change Act 2021, and President of GLOBE Legislators — climate ambition must translate into effective governance, institutional action and measurable outcomes.

CONVENING PARTNERS

- African Union Commission
- UN Economic Commission for Africa
- African Development Bank
- Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA)
- Afreximbank
- ClimDev-Africa Programme

A QUESTION OF AGENCY

Africa's Climate Challenge Is No Longer Only a Question of Vulnerability. It Is Now a Question of Agency.

For decades, Africa has rightly insisted that the continent has contributed the least to historical greenhouse-gas emissions while suffering some of the most severe climate impacts. That argument remains valid and must continue to shape demands for climate justice, finance, technology transfer, adaptation support, and loss and damage.

BUT THE MOMENT BEFORE AFRICA NOW REQUIRES SOMETHING MORE

A shift from presenting climate priorities to exercising climate agency.

Climate priorities describe what Africa needs. Climate agency defines what Africa decides, designs, builds, finances, governs, and defends for itself.

It Must Help Author the Rules, Institutions, Financing Mechanisms, and Implementation Pathways That Determine the Future of Climate Action

Africa must not only attend global climate negotiations or be represented in their outcomes; it must help author the rules, institutions, financing mechanisms, and implementation pathways that determine the future of climate action.

Climate agency defines what Africa decides, designs, builds, finances, governs, and defends for itself.

Decides

Designs

Builds

Finances

Governs

Defends

A DISTINCTION THAT MATTERS

Participation, Representation, Agency

PARTICIPATION

means Africa is present at the table.

REPRESENTATION

means Africa's interests are counted in declarations, boards, communiqués, and negotiating texts.

AGENCY

is different. Agency means Africa sets terms rather than merely responding to terms set elsewhere. It means designing instruments rather than qualifying for instruments designed by others. It means deciding who assesses, who approves, who disburses, and who benefits. A continent can be well represented in a system it does not shape. Climate leadership means moving from being consulted to being the author.

FROM PLEDGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

The Question Is Not Whether Commitments Exist. It Is Whether They Can Be Delivered.

International climate diplomacy has produced many commitments: conventions, agreements, Nationally Determined Contributions, net-zero targets, finance pledges, and adaptation frameworks. Africa's urgent question is whether the institutions, finance, laws, technologies, projects, and political will needed to implement them are in place — and who controls them.

IMPLEMENTATION IS A DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY — NOT A TECHNICAL FOLLOW-UP

Climate action on the continent must deliver resilience, energy access, industrialisation, jobs, technology, investment, food security, and sustainable development. Africa must continue to demand equitable international finance, but it cannot make its development future dependent on external pledges whose delivery remains uncertain, delayed, or dominated by non-African intermediaries.

An NDC Should No Longer Be Read as a Diplomatic Submission

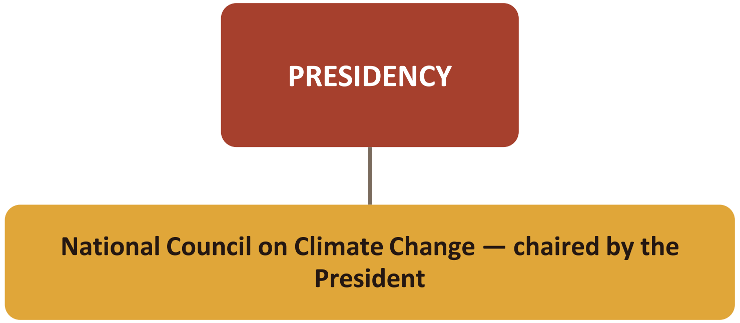
Climate change in Africa interacts with poverty, infrastructure deficits, rain-fed agriculture, rapid urbanisation, energy poverty, weak social protection, and constrained access to capital.

Each NDC must become an implementation architecture — an investment framework, sectoral plan, accountability tool, and pipeline of bankable projects — answering practical questions:

- **What must be delivered**
- **By whom**
- **At what cost**
- **Financed how**
- **Measured how**
- **Protected how across political transitions**

Nigeria's Climate Change Act 2021: Ending Inter-Agency Rivalry

The Act translates climate ambition into law and governance — creating institutional responsibility through the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), and anchoring climate coordination at the highest level of government.



"Climate policy cuts across every sector." It involves:

- Environment
- Finance
- Energy
- Petroleum
- Transport
- Agriculture
- Trade
- Industry
- Solid Minerals
- Water
- Planning
- Local Government
- Science

Without a clear coordinating authority, implementation can be weakened by overlapping mandates and institutional competition — the "peer jealousy" where ministries and agencies compete for visibility, budgets, and authority instead of coordinating delivery.

THE COST OF INACTION IS NOT THEORETICAL

Nigeria's Floods of 2012, 2022 and 2024

2012	2022	2024

- Lives lost
- Millions displaced
- Crops destroyed
- Infrastructure damaged
- Severe economic losses

The lesson is that better disaster response is not enough. Africa must move from reactive disaster management to anticipatory climate-risk management — flood-risk mapping, drainage, dam safety, wetlands protection, land-use planning, early-warning systems, resilient infrastructure, and climate-responsive budgeting.

Climate Commitments Become Real Only When They Are Translated into Law

Parliaments approve appropriations, scrutinise executive action, pass climate legislation, domesticate international commitments, and ensure that public institutions deliver on their mandates.

Pass Climate Legislation

Approve Appropriations

Scrutinise Executive Action

Domesticate International Commitments

Ensure Public Institutions Deliver on Their Mandates

Negotiation without implementation capacity produces declarations. Implementation without legislative backing risks fragmentation. Climate agency requires both — built year-round through parliaments, regional institutions, ministries, development banks, universities, technical agencies, civil society, private investors, and local governments.

Africa's Leadership Should Focus on Five Areas of Global Climate Governance

1 Accreditation and disbursement rules of multilateral climate funds.

Institutions such as the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, and the Loss and Damage Fund should not treat African institutions merely as implementers of externally designed solutions. Where African development banks, national climate funds, regional institutions, and technical agencies have the capacity, they should be the first point of access, assessment, and disbursement.

2 The future of climate finance beyond headline figures.

The debate should not only be about how much money is pledged, but what counts as climate finance, how much is grant-based rather than loan-based, who bears the cost of capital, who controls access, and whether finance reduces Africa's risk premium.

3 Carbon-market rules under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

Carbon markets can mobilise finance, but only if they support domestic transformation, protect communities, and ensure environmental integrity. Carbon finance must contribute to African industrialisation, land restoration, community benefit, and long-term development.

Africa's Leadership Should Focus on Five Areas of Global Climate Governance

4

Climate-related trade rules, including carbon-border measures.

As major economies introduce climate-linked trade restrictions, African producers may face new competitiveness pressures. Africa must coordinate climate negotiators, trade ministries, and the AfCFTA Secretariat so that global climate rules do not become a new tariff wall against African industrialisation.

5

The metrics of adaptation, loss and damage, and resilience.

Adaptation success should not be measured only by externally designed indicators. It should be grounded in African realities: whether farmers are protected, cities are resilient, coastal communities are safer, water systems function, food production is secured, and infrastructure can withstand future climate shocks.

This is where the Belém–Antalya–Addis roadmap should lead: from declarations to delivery, from ambition to institutions, from needs to instruments, and from representation to authorship.

An Agenda of Instruments for the Antalya Roadmap

1
African Climate Implementation Compact

2
Project-Preparation Facility

3
Continental Adaptation Investment Pipeline

4
Climate Intelligence Network

5
Green Industrialisation Compact

6
Energy-Access & Transition Compact

7
Fair Climate-Trade Framework

8
Blue Economy Investment Initiative

Africa should arrive at global climate forums with projects and investment propositions, not only demands.

AGENCY ALSO REQUIRES...

Mobilising African Capital — and a Just Energy Transition

MOBILISING AFRICAN CAPITAL

Africa must use its own public resources more strategically to crowd in pension funds, sovereign wealth funds, commercial banks, development-finance institutions, and private investors. Public and concessional finance should reduce risk so that larger pools of African and international capital can follow. Adaptation projects with limited commercial returns must remain anchored in public and concessional finance.

A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

In a continent where hundreds of millions still lack reliable electricity, a just transition must mean more than emissions reduction — access, affordability, reliability, industrial opportunity, clean cooking, productive power, and jobs. Africa's renewable energy, gas transition resources, critical minerals, agriculture, forests, oceans, and young population must be converted into value chains, not exported as raw materials while finished green technologies are imported back.

THE MEASURE OF LEADERSHIP

The Real Test of Climate Ambition Is Not the Quality of the Pledge — It Is the Quality of Implementation

- A farmer is better protected from drought and flooding
- A community has reliable energy
- A young African can build a green enterprise
- Women have access to finance and land
- Cities are resilient and industries can compete
- Africa's natural resources create African value

Africa is vulnerable to climate change, but Africa is also valuable — with the people, resources, institutions, markets, ecosystems, minerals, renewable-energy potential and maritime geography needed to become a major contributor to global climate solutions.

CLOSING

Key Messages and Takeaways

1 Africa must move from climate participation to climate agency — shaping the rules, institutions, agencies, finance, and implementation pathways that affect its future.

2 Implementation is now the real test of climate ambition — pledges must become laws, budgets, projects, accountable institutions/agencies, and measurable outcomes for African people.

3 Africa's climate leadership must be built through African institutions and agencies, capital, and authority — with fair international finance supporting, not controlling, the continent's development pathway.

"Climate leadership is not simply asking for a better global system. It is building one — with African institutions, African decisions, African capital, and African authority at the centre."