



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

**FOURTEENTH CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE
CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA
(CCDA-XIV)**

Theme:

***From Pledges to Implementation: The Belém–Antalya–
Addis Roadmap***

Opening statement

By

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**United Nations Under-Secretary-General and
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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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**H.E. [Representative of the Federal Democratic
Republic of Ethiopia],**

**H.E. Moses Vilakati, Commissioner for Agriculture,
Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable
Environment, African Union Commission,**

**Distinguished representatives of our ClimDev-Africa
partners,**

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am happy to welcome you to the Fourteenth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa.

I am particularly delighted because we now have an important opportunity as a continent to influence the direction of global climate action.

Our theme this year, '*From Pledges to Implementation*,' reflects a challenge that has persisted for far too long.

We have negotiated commitments. We have set targets. And we have developed Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans. Yet implementation continues to lag behind.

For Africa, the imbalance is particularly difficult to ignore.

We have said it many times, and you will no doubt hear it again during this conference, that Africa contributes less than four per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, yet bears some of the heaviest consequences of climate change.

While this remains an unfortunate reality for our continent, we must not allow it to limit Africa's climate story to one of victimhood.

We are also a continent of enormous renewable energy potential, critical mineral resources, a young population, expanding markets and growing technological capacity.

That is why we must continue to make the case for climate justice and greater international support. But let's also ask how we can harness these assets for our own development, and play a greater role in shaping the rules, investments and solutions that drive global climate action.

That said, finance remains one of the biggest barriers to implementation across Africa.

The continent needs an estimated US\$277 billion every year to implement its NDCs through 2030. Yet current climate finance flows meet only around 11 per cent of that requirement.

But the question is not simply how much finance we mobilize. We must also ask: At what cost? On what terms? And what development outcomes will it deliver?

For countries already grappling with high debt-service costs and limited fiscal space, the terms of climate finance matter enormously. Finance that adds to unsustainable debt will only make implementation harder.

What this means, in essence, is that we need climate finance that countries can actually afford. This requires greater access to grants and concessional resources, while creating the conditions to mobilize much more private capital for climate investment.

But as we mobilize this finance, we must also be clear about what we want it to achieve.

More than 600 million Africans still lack access to electricity. So, for us at the ECA, climate action must go hand in hand with expanding energy access, building productive capacity and creating jobs.

Africa's renewable energy and critical mineral resources give us an opportunity to power our economies, process more of what we produce here on the continent, build regional value chains and create jobs.

The good news is that we now have the African Continental Free Trade Area, giving us a market through which we can do this at scale.

Excellencies,

For many years, Africa has rightly worked to ensure that its concerns are heard in global climate negotiations. We must continue to do so.

But our ambition should go further. Africa must also help shape the solutions.

This means bringing credible African proposals on finance, adaptation, energy, trade, technology and climate governance into the global climate process.

So, as we prepare for COP31, let's ask not only what Africa expects from the international community, but also what Africa is proposing.

Our discussions over the next three days will feed into the **Addis Ababa Climate Action Messages**, which should set out practical African proposals to take to COP31 in Antalya, while also laying the groundwork for COP32 here in Addis Ababa in 2027.

Excellencies,

At the end of the day, implementation has to mean something in people's lives.

Are farmers better able to withstand drought?

Are communities better protected from climate shocks?

Do more homes and businesses have access to reliable electricity?

Are we creating industries and jobs from Africa's own resources?

These are the kinds of outcomes that should guide our discussions over the next three days.

We have an opportunity here in Addis Ababa to put forward practical proposals that respond to Africa's realities and can help move implementation forward.

As we begin our deliberations, ask yourselves: When history looks back at this conference, what will it say we accomplished here in Addis Ababa?

I, therefore, urge you all to make this conference count. Let it be remembered for what it helped Africa achieve, not simply for the discussions we had.

As always, the Economic Commission for Africa stands ready to work with Governments, development partners, financial institutions, the private sector and all stakeholders to come up with practical proposals on climate action for sustainable development.

Thank you.