

Africa Day Event at COP 20 – Africa in the Post - 2015 Climate Agreement

Lima, Peru

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Speech by Dr. Fatima Denton, Director of Special Initiatives Division at ECA

And personal representative of the Executive Secretary of ECA

His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Gharib Bilal

The Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Representative of the Co-ordinator of the Committee of the African Heads of States and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC),

Honourable Ministers,

Representative of the African Development Bank, Mr. Alex Rugamba, Representation of the African Union Commission, Madam Olushola Olayide,

Dear Delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen, friends and colleagues of Africa

I would like to thank you for coming in such large numbers and also to present to you the regrets of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Mr. Carlos Lopes who, due to prior work commitments is not able to be here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here today because, six years ago, our principals had a vision – a vision that was to set the stage for Africa’s response to climate change impacts. They were bold enough to dream of a future in which Africa’s children do not have to mortgage their lives paying for environmental losses they did not contribute to. However, our principals recognised that they had to give more

meaning to their dreams, and they translated it into a vision, which gave birth to ClimDev-Africa.

This is a programme that was created out of a need – a need to start from the vantage point of appropriate knowledge, through the availability of critical climate information, walking through the lens of strong observations systems and networks, and weaving these together to disseminate critical knowledge to vulnerable communities; and, in a parallel fashion, strengthen policy decisions for thoughtful and rational policies that are mainstreamed in development plans, cognisant of the cumulative effects of climate change impacts, acting in consortia with the effects of other stressors.

That was 6 years ago.

Today we are here because we want to push beyond the boundaries of hope, we want to produce a strong current that will help us sail through CoP 21 in Paris next year, and we are daring enough to set ourselves on a course that will ensure that our children will use the next fifty years of their lives enjoying greater prosperity of blue and green economies, generating and securing enduring jobs, using the dividends of a transformed agricultural sector to build strong industries and nurturing a confident, enterprising, resourceful and innovative youth population.

Now, we could ask ourselves what has that got to with Lima and why would a post 2015 agreement hold so much sway for our future and that of our children and their children?

Ladies and gentlemen,

The answer is simple. It is about our collective security, and it is also about Africa's resolve to continue on a growth trajectory that will not reverse in a downward spiral; where the funds we generate from the Green Climate Fund are used to "mop" up environmental catastrophes arising from loss and damage, instead of building flood defences, shoring up wealth that will stem

climate hazards through effective and resilient disaster risk reduction programmes and building a strong foundation of low carbon development growth and climate resilient economies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The UN General Assembly meeting on climate change in September of this year was essentially about cultivating a deep sense of confidence and letting world leaders know that the fight against climate change can be beaten through bankable projects, strong climate action across developed and developing countries. It was also a demonstration of political will that knows no limits and countries buoyant with hope, ready to put their best scientific brains, their most innovative minds and armed with enterprise and determination to keep climate change impacts at arms length.

Today in Lima, Africa has to generate the same will, an equal compulsion and a strong enough resolve to say that we have come a long way since Kyoto, and we stand ready as 54 countries, united in our determination to negotiate a successor treaty that will be rooted in justice, equity and drawing on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

Africa is encouraged to see new pledges of up to \$9.3 billion made to the Green Climate Fund, and many African countries are already championing projects that demonstrate that a low carbon development pathway will make investment and business sense, especially since the impacts of climate change are oblivious of boundaries. They do not understand history or geography and will certainly not ease the pain and desperation that farmers in the Sahel feel or take away the anxiety felt by pastoralists in the Horn of Africa as a result of persistent droughts.

Africa, in the post-2015 negotiations, is about building a strong coalition of partners that will support its efforts to produce bankable proposals and strong adaptation and mitigation projects. Africa's place within the post-2015 negotiation framework is about confidently taking up a space in which the experiences of the Clean Development Mechanism are not repeated in the Green Climate Fund where Africa is hemmed in and not able to punch its way to viable adaptation programmes and projects in the same way that we have seen in Asia and Latin America.

Ladies and gentlemen, Africa in the negotiation process is about a shared vision that addresses mitigation, adaptation, technology, finance and capacity building in a “balanced, integrated and comprehensive” manner. But, it is especially about how we negotiate and open up space for a broader context that joins the social, economic and environmental dots and strengthens the foundation for sustainable development. Africa in the post-2015 negotiation is about how we negotiate our atmospheric space today. Africa’s share of the atmospheric space is about the stabilisation of our climate; but it is also about ensuring that Article 2 of the Convention on food security and sustainable development does not lose its potency and become a mere reference for history books.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our leaders in the Arusha Declaration have lamented the fact that a low and inadequate mitigation ambition will allow some countries to continue making excessive global emissions beyond 2020, which will have untold consequences, especially to our countries, including increased warming and will raise the costs of both adaptation and mitigation in Africa due to Africa’s constrained adaptive capacity. Africa and its small islands developing states are eager to transition to green and blue economies, a climate resilient development, but this transition cannot trump Africa’s right and its share to the global atmospheric space. Avoiding dangerous atmospheric interference requires a temperature goal that is commensurate with current levels of emissions; but it is also means that we have to go beyond business-as-usual emissions.

Africa wants a successor treaty that is not only about a system that is thirsty for the soft “institutional” issues, irrespective of their importance, through the proliferation of committees and mechanisms, but can work up an even bigger appetite for a treaty that makes hard choices on technology transfer, bold emissions reductions and commensurate climate finance.

This is the surest way that we can continue to close the finance, technology and adaptation gaps. It is about African small island states not taken hostage by a series of environmental losses that deflect their attention from building a strong growth hub for their blue and green economies and the management of their oceans and marine resources.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have made some inroads since Cancun with regard to mitigation commitments and action on REDD, and we have made decent progress since the establishment of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action. In many ways Lima constitutes a dress rehearsal for Africa. It helps us to prepare our strategy as we march towards Paris. Africa wants a strong climate change architecture. Lima is about using our best assets, resources and time to stay on the course of growth, to put in place a strong basis for a treaty that will give our women and youth a central place in the global economy translated into viable livelihoods; it is also about telling the world that we cannot grow without our agricultural sector – it is the basis of our civilization – it is the ticket towards our industrial development – and it is a foundation for ensuring that energy and water securities are framed and intersected through a performing and lucrative agricultural sector.

Africa is ready for Paris 2015 and its people are keen to embrace support and broker partnerships that will deliver on bankable proposals for adaptation and mitigation. But, most of all Africa's people are hopeful that the race to Paris 2015 will not leave them in their starter blocks, but rather, they will sprint to the finish lines that are signposted for a climate resilient future and a treaty that is fair and just and takes note of our collective human security needs and values. Our determination should be measured beyond "intended nationally determined contributions". Our contributions should be weighted against an even stronger will to sever ties with poverty for good, and to use climate as a key resource to our shared prosperity.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is the extent of our ambition, this is our covenant between our generation and future generations, and this is the metric on which we measure our collective success.

THANK YOU!