

Africa Day at COP30 | Opening Remarks by H.E. Commissioner Moses Vilakati

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission

Belém, Brazil | 11 November 2025 | 1:30-3:30pm (BRT) | Africa Pavilion

Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my distinct honour to deliver these remarks on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, who conveys warm greetings and unwavering support for Africa Day at COP30. This flagship event is a moment of continental pride and global significance, a platform where Africa speaks with one voice, not only to demand climate justice but also to share experiences on tangible climate actions on the ground and offer bold, scalable solutions to the climate crisis.

We gather here in Belém, Brazil, carrying the momentum of the **Second Africa Climate Summit (ACSII)** held in Addis Ababa in September. The **Addis Ababa Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action**, endorsed by African leaders, marked a turning point. It called for a shift from **project-level financing** to tangible long-term partnerships that reach communities, entrepreneurs, and ecosystems on the ground. It affirmed African agency, demanded systemic reform of global finance, and challenged the world to recognise Africa not as a victim, but as a solution provider, and consistently with the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), particularly in Article 3.1. on **Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities**".

Africa is home to **20% of the world's carbon sinks**, including the Congo Basin, which alone stores **60 billion tons of CO₂**. Yet, we earn less than **1% of global carbon market revenues**. This is not just an economic injustice; it is a climate injustice. We must reform carbon markets to align with African realities, reduce revenue leakage, and empower local communities. With the **Africa Carbon Markets Action Plan (AAPCM)** and

AUDA-NEPAD's Principles on Integrity and Equity, we are laying the foundation for **African-led, high-integrity carbon trading** that could unlock **USD 100 billion annually by 2030** and create **5 million green jobs**.

But climate finance must go beyond carbon. Africa receives **less than 10% of global adaptation finance**, despite being the most vulnerable region. Over **600 million Africans** remain at risk from climate shocks. We must scale **nature-based solutions**, from the Congo Basin to Senegal's agroforestry, and mobilise at least **USD 50 billion annually** for adaptation by 2030. We must also redirect part of our **USD 350 billion in sovereign and pension funds**, currently invested abroad, into transformative domestic projects.

In this regard, I wish to highlight two landmark initiatives that reflect Africa's commitment to nature-based solutions:

First, the **Great Green Wall Initiative**, which began in the Sahel, is now expanding into the **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** region, bringing the total number of participating countries to **22**. This expansion marks a bold step toward making the GWI a **truly Pan-African initiative**, restoring **100 million hectares of degraded land**, sequestering **250 million tons of CO₂**, and aiming to create **10 million jobs** by 2030. It is a living symbol of Africa's resilience and innovation.

Second, just last week, Africa convened the **Inaugural Africa Summit on Biodiversity**, a historic moment that reaffirmed our continent's leadership in protecting biodiversity as a cornerstone of climate action. The summit called for increased investment in ecosystem restoration, community-led conservation, and the integration of biodiversity into national development plans. It also emphasised the need to align climate and biodiversity finance, ensuring that nature-based solutions are not only protected but also scaled.

Energy access remains a cornerstone of climate justice. Despite the abundance of oil, gas, and renewable energy sources, **600 million Africans lack access to clean energy**. We must prioritise African energy needs, promote local battery manufacturing, and end the export of raw minerals. Africa produces **75% of the global cobalt, 50% of the global**

manganese, and 25% of the global bauxite, yet captures only 5–10% of the final value. This must change. Green industrialisation is not a luxury; it is a necessity.

Technology and innovation are also key. Africa's youth are ready to lead circular economies, harness AI and blockchain for climate transparency, and build green enterprises. We must invest in their potential and ensure that climate finance is inclusive, participatory, and transformative.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Africa Day at COP30 is not just a ceremonial moment; it is a strategic intervention. We call on the global community to redirect **30% of climate finance** to African-led initiatives., Support the **Loss & Damage Fund** with predictable, grant-based financing, recognise and reward Africa's nature-based solutions and biodiversity leadership, Partner with Africa to scale green technologies and infrastructure, and ensure that land restoration and energy access are central to climate finance frameworks.

Let us act with **dignity**, with **urgency**, and with **solidarity**. The road from Addis Ababa to Belém must be paved with commitments, not just conversations. Africa is ready. Africa is rising. And Africa is leading.

I thank you.