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UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: +251 11 551 7700 / +251 11 518 25 58/
Ext 2558

Website: www.au.int

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

PRESS RELEASE

COP 25: 'Africa's future depends on solidarity' Leaders and development partners rally around climate change goals



Madrid, Spain, 11 December 2019 – Africa Day which took place on Tuesday 10 December 2019 on the sidelines of the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 25) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 25) in Madrid, Spain, was a crowd puller. The large meeting room 5 at the IFEMA Conference Center which hosted the event was full to capacity with participants including Ministers from the African Union (AU) member states as well as high government officials, diplomats, representatives of the civil society and partner organizations dealing with climate change and related issues, journalists and invited guests. They all came in their numbers to listen to the different speakers who presented updates of the work done by their respective institutions in the area of climate change

and related activities. Worth highlighting that, the distinguished speakers all called for a united front to tackle the challenges of climate change in Africa.



Addressing the participants during the opening ceremony of the Africa Day, Yasmin Fouad, Egypt's Minister of Environmental Affairs, on behalf of the African Union, said: "We have, and will continue to engage and to seek landing grounds on the outstanding issues, but must flag our concern at the apparent reluctance by our interlocutors to engage on issues of priority to developing countries, as evidenced by the large number of such issues which have simply been pushed from session to session without any progress."

In her Message, Amb. Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission (AUC) highlighted that climate change affects sectors key to Africa's socio-economic development such as Agriculture, livestock and fisheries energy, biodiversity and tourism. She called on African countries need to take stock of the Paris Agreement, and its implementation around finance capacity building and technology.

"The climate disaster issues confronting the continent demand a predictable and unified response," said Mohamed Beavogui, Director General of African Risk Capacity, an agency of the [African Union](#) that helps governments respond to natural disasters.

"Africa needs to move towards market-based innovative financing models to achieve a strong, united, resilient and globally influential continent. The future of Africa depends on solidarity." Africa contributes the least to global warming emissions yet is the continent most vulnerable to climate change, as witnessed by devastating natural disasters recently. With that in mind, Africa Day has been held at the conference every year since COP 17 in 2011 to rally support for the continent's cause.

"The lack of concerted and meaningful global ambition and action to tackle climate change poses an existential threat to African populations," said Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). She said the ECA would support African countries to revise their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to attract private sector investments in clean energy.

The Paris Agreement is the guiding force of current climate negotiations. It calls on nations to curb temperature increases at 2°C by the end of this century, while attempting to contain rises within 1.5°C. The next step is to implement NDCs, which set out national

targets under the Paris Agreement. While African countries outlined bold aspirations to build climate resilient and low-carbon economies in their NDCs, the continent's position is that it should not be treated the same as developed nations as its carbon emissions constitute a fraction of the world's big economies.



“The African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) remains committed to partnering with other institutions in providing the requisite support to AU member states in reviewing and updating their NDCs,” said Estherine Fotabong, Director of Programmes at AUDA-NEPAD.

H.E Barbara Creecy, South Africa's Environment Minister and current chair of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, said the Africa Day event should come up with new ideas to enhance the implementation of NDCs in Africa.

Africa is already responding positively to the challenge of climate change, said Anthony Nyong, Director for Climate Change and Green Growth at the African Development Bank, citing huge investment interest in renewables at the Bank's Africa Investment Forum in Johannesburg. “Clearly, we are a continent that has what it takes to create the Africa that we want to see happen. I believe what has been the missing link is the ability to brand right and to act on the market signals,” Nyong said.

“We continue to present Africa as a vulnerable case and not as a business case with opportunities. In fact, where we have attempted the latter, the results have been spot-on.”

Chief Fortune Charumbira, Vice President of the Pan African Parliament, said robust climate legislation was key. “The world's response to the challenge has shown that legislation is imperative to cement efforts employed by various stakeholders; from the Paris Agreement to Nationally Determined Contributions,” he said.

Worth recalling that, Africa Day is a key feature of Africa's presence and participation at the various Conferences of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It started at COP17 and is organized during every COP by

Africa's principal regional institutions, namely: the African Union Commission (AUC) and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) and the Pan African Parliament (PAP) in collaboration with AU member States and RECs. Africa Day provides the platform for dialogue, discussion and call to action on key climate change issues impacting on Africa's development agenda.

Media contact:

Esther Azaa Tankou, Head of Information, Directorate of Information and Communication, African Union Commission Tel: +251 911361185, E-mail: yamboue@africa-union.org / esthertankou@yahoo.com

For further information contact

Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: dic@africa-union.org | Web Site: www.au.int | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

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