



Statement

by

**Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma
Chairperson
African Union Commission**

on the occasion of the

**Second annual Conference on Climate Change and
Development in Africa**

- **Your Excellency, Ato Haile-Mariam Dessalegn, Prime Minister, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia;**
- **Mr Carlos Lopes, UN Under Secretary General and ECA Executive Secretary;**
- **Dr. Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank;**
- **Mr Jeremiah Lengoasa, WMO Deputy Secretary General**
- **Honorable Ministers,**
- **Excellencies;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

It is a great honour and privilege for me to take part in this vital conference on climate change and development.

[Before I proceed further, let me pay a special tribute to His Excellency the Prime Minister for his presence. In honouring us with his presence, he continues the tradition of his illustrious predecessor, H.E. Ato Meles Zenawi, who has left us, who displayed exceptional interest in and devotion to championing Africa's cause on climate change issues. Mr. Prime Minister we are grateful for your support and thank you for your presence.]

For long, Africa, in concert with other developing regions, has been urging its partners to reflect on climate change as a developmental concern, given the nexus that exists between environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development. This important meeting represents an endeavour that had its origins in the late 1980s when the Brundtland Report led bare the developmental significance of environmental changes.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

This phenomenon of climate change has significant implications, not just for the environment, but also for the economy, society and politics. It impacts on all sectors, from agricultural production and health, to foreign policy and international security.

Given that climate change will be with us for a long time to come, it is imperative that conferences of this kind continue to articulate the challenges facing humanity, and the risks of delayed action or, as is the case, the dangers of inaction.

The joint initiative of AUC, UNECA and AfDB that aims at integrating Climate Risk Management (CRM) into pertinent policy and decision-making processes throughout the continent, is an eloquent illustration of the efforts our institutions are making to prepare Member States against the vagaries of climate change.

I am particularly delighted with the themes tabled for discussion during this second conference of Climate Change and Development in Africa, which include:

- Climate Service delivery for development
- Sustainable energy access for all Africans by 2030
- Outstanding issues in climate negotiations that are relevant for Africa.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference held in Brazil in July this year, the protection of the climate system for present and future generations was reiterated with considerable fervour.

Concerns were again raised about the limited progress regarding the international responses to climate change, the mobilization of funds, and the need to exploit inter-linkages between climate change and other issues such as water, energy and food; and short-lived climate pollutants. Specifically, it was widely felt that the threat of climate change, vulnerability of African countries to climate change and the urgency to enhance adaptation initiatives to climate change, represents an immediate global priority.

And so, in a Conference such as this, the message to upscale effective and appropriate international responses is crucial to advance with a view to accelerating the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions. Africa cannot shy away from its mission to remind the world that the risks are mounting, and speed is of the essence to operationalise the Green Climate Fund. It also needs to renew the call on the parties to implement their commitments under the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol, and to build upon progress achieved thus far, notably in Cancun and in Durban.

As we approach CoP 18 in Doha towards the end of this year, we should remind ourselves of the opportunities that exist to advance the cause of climate change through South-South cooperation, a feature emphasized so eloquently at the Rio+20 Conference. The desire to reinforce South-South cooperation stems from the urgency imposed by the climate challenge itself, where additional resources will need to be tapped to facilitate the implementation of adaptation and mitigation development programmes. At Rio+20, China's contribution and the matching funds by the Government of Brazil will take the South-South Cooperation a notch higher, which, given the significant ties that exist between Africa and these two countries, will deepen the partnership

through Africa-Brazil-China (ABC) Cooperation. This will improve the prospects for the effective transfer of knowledge and technologies from China and Brazil to Africa, hence, facilitating Africa's transition to Green Economy.

Indeed, the mechanism that will complement and catalyze this transition even further, is the African Green Economy Partnership. This would promote coordinated and consolidated support to African countries in their transition to Green Economy. This would entail the effective integration of the principles and approaches of Green Economy and Green Jobs into national development policies and planning processes thereby laying down the foundation for the development of the required institutional and physical infrastructure to facilitate the climate-friendly transition. The mechanism will also provide a knowledge platform that consolidates key lessons and best practices from within and outside the region. It would also promote Green Entrepreneurship under the Youth Entrepreneurship Facility.

In this regard, Africa will continue to stress on the implementation of ecosystem-based adaptation programmes that will seek to build the ecosystem resilience of member states and communities. The urgency to promote the establishment of the African Adaptation Knowledge Network is designed to enhance the adaptation management capacity of Member States through research, technical assistance, knowledge sharing and partnerships.

As part of the broader aim to combat the risks of climate change and promote disaster risk reduction strategies in RECs, Africa will draw inspiration from the Rio+20 outcomes which place a special premium on the UN Sustainable Energy for All Initiative, whose main goals are

of critical importance to Africa's poverty reduction and sustainable development imperatives. They include the development of renewable energy, expansion of energy access and promotion of energy efficiency. These goals correspond to the dimensions of energy as reflected in the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), a key thrust of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) of the African Union.

Because energy is a critical factor in the equation to address the challenge of climate change, the effective implementation of the African Programme on Sustainable Energy Development (APSED) remains a crucial requirement in facilitating African countries to develop their energy sector on a sustainable basis.

And yet, these initiatives cannot be seen in isolation. It is in this connection that the issue of sustainable production and consumption looms large. The Partnership for Sustainable Consumption and Production in Africa has received support from the African 10 Year Framework Programme (African 10YFP) where a number of African countries have been assisted in developing local and national sustainable consumption and production programmes. It also facilitated the establishment of an Africa Eco-labelling Mechanism with a purpose of improving access for sustainable African products to regional and global markets. All these initiatives tend to complement efforts at dealing with climate change concerns through the Green Economy approach.

As we prepare for Doha, Africa's development agenda on climate change will need to emphasize the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction in adaptation activities. I have no doubt that our negotiators

are mindful of how the concerns of disaster risk reduction can be integrated into the Adaptation Framework. In this regard, Africa should continue to stress the establishment of an “International Climate Risk Insurance Facility” and a mechanism to address loss and damage”.

Mr. Prime Minister,

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The aforementioned issues represent a vital set of concerns and, indeed, challenges, that require concerted action at various levels of engagement. It is my sincere hope, that this conference will help us to move forward on a number of crucial areas.

I take this opportunity to convey my sincere appreciation to all our partners that are working diligently with the African Union Commission to improve availability and use of quality climate information and services, and addressing the needs of local, national and regional decision makers, in support of sustainable development and the achievement of the MDGs, in critical climate-sensitive sectors and areas in Africa. Allow me to expressly name UNECA, AfDB, UNEP, WMO and the EU, among others, for their commitment to support Africa in building resilience to climate change and variability.

I look forward for your conclusions and recommendations and I want to assure you that the AUC, in working closely with our partners, will pursue courses of action that bring Africa closer to the goals of sustainable development.

I thank you for your kind attention.