

AFRICAN UNION



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STATEMENT

BY

**H.E COMMISSIONER FOR RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE
THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

AT THE

**OPENING CEREMONY OF THE FOURTH CONFERENCE ON
CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA (CCDA-4)**

**October 8, 2014
9:30-10:30 am**

Your Excellency, Ms. Hakima El-Haite, Minister Delegate to the Ministry of Energy, Mining, Water and Environment in charge of Environment and Energy of the Kingdom of Morocco

Your Excellency, Dr. Abdalla Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary of Economic Commission for Africa

Your Excellency, Ms. Yacine Fal, African Development Bank (AfDB) Resident Representative in the Kingdom of Morocco

Honourable Ministers

Representatives of the International Organizations

Members of the Diplomatic Community

The Press Corps

Distinguished Delegates and Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

I feel honored to make this statement on behalf of the Africa Union Commission. I wish, first of all, to convey to you warm greetings and best wishes from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, HE Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma.

I would also like to register my appreciation for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to the delegation of the African Union Commission since arrival in this beautiful city of Marrakech. I wish to also commend the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and other Partners for the cooperation and support with the African Union Commission in implementing our joint ClimDev-Africa Program and all the efforts deployed in convening this Fourth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-4).

Our meeting today is taking place just after the UN Climate Summit held on 23rd September 2014 in New York and before the UNFCCC COP 20 in Lima, Peru that will take place few weeks from now. I am highlighting this to show that our Conference is timely, and avails us the opportunity to share ideas and strengthen

our resolve to communicate our shared vision on climate and enhance our collaboration for concrete interventions in African Member States.

Honourable Ministers
Excellences
Distinguished Delegates and Participants
Ladies and Gentlemen

The World Leaders at the just concluded UN Summit on Climate Change in New York do promise efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions, reduce and ultimately halt tropical deforestation, and increase the share of electric vehicles in cities. They also heralded initiatives to increase the use of renewable energy, with a particular focus on a group of countries in Western and South Africa. A new coalition of governments, business, finance, multilateral development banks and civil society leaders announced their commitment to mobilize upwards of \$200 billion for financing low carbon and climate resilient development.

Moreover, The Secretary General of the United Nations praised a plan that builds on an earlier promise from wealthy nations to raise \$100 billion to help developing nations shift to renewables and adapt to extreme environmental conditions. Therefore, this is now our moment for action.

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The theme of our conference is: "Africa Can Feed Africa Now: Translating Climate Knowledge into Action." This theme is especially relevant because 2014 marks the 10-year anniversary of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and "Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa as the declared in 2012 by the African Heads of State and Government.

Given the seriousness of the problem that Africa's agriculture is yet to match the needs of a growing population, climate change is expected to complicate efforts in finding solutions to the problem as it causes severe disruptions to agricultural production systems, the environment, and the biodiversity that supports food production systems. Africa must therefore look into options that can turn climate challenges into opportunities, especially those that improve agricultural

performance and enhance capacity to facilitate broad-based poverty reduction and food security for all.

Agriculture will remain a key driver of African economic growth, with a prime responsibility of providing employment opportunities for a rapidly growing and predominantly youthful population. The agricultural value chain therefore provides multiple entry points and pathways for advancing Africa's transformative agenda toward a green economy and low carbon development.

However, empowering people with climate change information and knowledge is a crucial key issue in enhancing the performance and sustainability of agriculture sector in Africa, hence Africa can feed Africa and that is the key role of ClimDev-Africa Program.

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The agricultural sector in many African countries has been evolving rapidly in response to dynamic population growth and movements, and as a result of regional or national policies and more pronounced interventions by private and external actors. Accurate, objective and timely information is needed by all stakeholders involved in agriculture and development to address issues such as the early identification of risks and the assessment of the severity of emergencies, in order to better plan and monitor national/regional agriculture and trade policies and, ultimately, to reach the objectives of improved food security and sustainable agriculture.

The nexus between water, energy and food security is another key issue for Africa as it amalgamates management and governance across sectors and scales. This linkage helps climate mitigation measures to be more "water smart", climate adaptation measures to be less energy intensive and avoids detrimental consequences for food production and other vital ecosystem services.

This nexus approach between water, energy and food security will open the gateway for integrative responses especially for systems with inseparable relationships that require interconnected solutions. The uncertainty and complexity characterizing climate impacts on dynamic systems such as agriculture, water and

energy systems often generate cascading effects across system boundaries whenever one of the interacting components is impacted.

Meanwhile, ensuring water, energy and food security in Africa must support a multi-faceted policy approach by governments, private sector and development partners in working together in addressing interrelated issues concurrently and unlocking the investment in infrastructure, capacity building and transfer of technologies required in seizing the opportunities arising from changing climate. Regional cooperation will be an important key player in the process for growth and development in our continent.

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I am sure that strengthening our partnerships and working more closely with different development sectors will move the African growth and development agenda forward faster.

It is my sincere hope that our conference will continue to consolidate Africa's partnership to face issues of climate change and is a key milestone towards building the much desired partnership and translating climate information and knowledge into the effective required actions.

I look forward to the productive outcomes of this Fourth Conference of Climate Change and Development in Africa as I am confident from the high attendance of the participants that it would proffer some of the crucial ways for Africa to be food and nutrition secured to feed the teeming populace in our continent.

I wish you fruitful and rewarding deliberations and I thank you all for your kind attention!