

**Opening and Keynote Address by H.E. Mr. Seyoum Mekonnen
State Minister, Ministry of Planning and Development (MoPD)**

Virtual Media Briefing on the Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2)

Date: Thursday, 31 July 2025 | Time: 2:00–3:30 PM EAT

H.E. Mr. Moses Vilakati, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment, African Union Commission,

Distinguished Members of the Media,

Colleagues from the African Union Commission,

Partners of ACS2,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All Protocols Observed,

Good afternoon, good morning—wherever you may be joining from.

Thank you for being with us today.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this **virtual media briefing on the preparations for the Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2)**, which Ethiopia is proud to host from **8 to 10 September 2025**, in collaboration with the **African Union Commission**.

As many of you may know, **Ethiopia is firmly committed to green growth and bold climate action**. The country has long served as a model for climate leadership, particularly through nature-based solutions such as the **Green Legacy Initiative**, which has successfully planted **over 40 billion seedlings in just six years**, increasing our forest cover from **17.2% in 2019 to 23.6% by 2023**.

In addition, **Ethiopia's investment in renewable energy** has strengthened regional integration through interconnections with Kenya, Djibouti, Sudan, and Tanzania. The country is also emerging as a continental leader in **e-mobility**.

Our initiatives—from the **City Resilience Programs through our Corridor Development** resulting in **enhancing dignity of our urban dwellers**. Our **transformational wheat production actions** is game changing initiative that enabled Ethiopia a **wheat self-sufficient and net exporter**.

These a few examples from Ethiopia demonstrate how African-led solutions can and do work. These actions deserve recognition and global support.

Colleagues,

This Summit is **not just another event**—it is **Africa's moment to lead**. It is **Africa's COP**.

The theme of ACS2 is: **“Accelerating Global Climate Solutions: Financing for Africa's Resilient and Green Development”**

Under this theme, we focus on two strategic pillars:

1. **Showcasing African Solutions for Climate Action**
2. **Unlocking Scalable Climate Finance**—including advocating for financial system reforms and promoting innovative financial instruments.

ACS2 will be a **platform for bold ideas, climate justice, and collective momentum**. We anticipate the participation of:

- **Over 45 Heads of State and Government, Ministers, Development partners, Youth leaders, Civil society representatives, Private sector actors, etc.**

All united in the shared goal of advancing a **climate-resilient and greener Africa**.

We aim at ACS2 for:

- Showcasing homegrown Africa led climate solutions
- A **unified African voice** ahead of COP30, UNGA, and the G20.
- **Push for climate finance reform** and secure tangible declarations and partnerships.
- Promote **multilateral cooperation** for resilient and inclusive green development.

To this end, we have generated strong momentum thanks to:

- **Six dedicated functional committees**
- High-level guidance from the **National Organizing Committee and Steering Committee**, led by the Prime Minister's Office
- Close **daily coordination with the African Union Commission**

Together, these efforts are ensuring that ACS2 **takes shape with clear focus on results and African leadership**.

So far:

- More than **45 official events** are programmed around the Summit's themes
- **Over 300 side event requests** received
- **All pavilion spaces** have been requested

- More than **25 formal consultations** conducted with **AU Member States, UN agencies, the diplomatic community, development partners, private sector actors, CSOs, and faith-based organizations, among others.**

We look forward to welcoming you to participate in our **2025 Green Legacy Campaign**—a tree-planting tradition we hope will become one of your most memorable experiences.

Distinguished participants,

You are not just observers—you are influencers.

You carry the **pen**, the **mic**, the **lens**, and the **platform**. You shape how the world sees Africa. Your work can:

- **Challenge outdated narratives**
- **Elevate African climate champions**
- **Inspire public engagement and action**

The African climate story is **rich, diverse, and urgent**—from the deserts of the Sahel, to technological hubs in Nairobi, and **ecosystem restoration through Green Legacy in Ethiopia**.

We need you to tell these stories—and to tell them boldly.

You will have access to:

- **A dedicated press conference room** for live interviews, briefings, and editorial work

- **More than 200 side events** offering story leads on green finance, youth leadership, and innovation
- **Voices from communities on the frontlines of climate action**
- Direct engagement with **Heads of State, ministers, youth, and innovators**

We are not just hosting a summit. **We are building a movement**, and every movement needs voices that amplify, challenge, and inform.

Africa is often portrayed primarily as a victim of climate change. While we acknowledge the **droughts, floods, and displacement** affecting our people, that narrative is incomplete. **Africa is a continent of solutions.**

We are:

- Scaling **climate-smart digital agriculture**
- Using **remote sensing to protect forests**
- Deploying **solar-powered irrigation and early warning systems**
- Advancing **indigenous knowledge** for adaptation
- Creating **green jobs**. With the Green Legacy in Ethiopia alone, we create about 1 million jobs for youth and women.
- And mobilizing **political will at the highest levels**

This is the story we must tell the world—and **you are central to telling it.**

Distinguished media representatives,

We encourage you to:

- Register for the **ACS2** as official media partners
- Pitch and publish stories spotlighting **African-led climate solutions**

- Host interviews with **frontline voices and youth champions**
- Share your content across platforms, including in **local languages**.

Let **this** be the Summit where Africa is no longer seen as waiting to be saved—but as **leading the way forward**.

Let us speak with **one united, bold African voice**.

Let us develop a strong Leaders Addis Ababa Declaration that shapes the future architecture of the global climate architecture.

Let us work together to have a true African led climate solutions showcased and recognized globally while sufficiently financially supported.

Let us work together to mobilize Africa leaders to take the lead in the global climate regime.

Thank you once again for your presence and commitment to Africa's climate future.

We welcome your ideas.

What stories do you believe the world must hear from ACS2?

Let's start building them—**together, today**.

I thank you.