

CCDA – VII

James Murombedzi

Opening Speech

Honorable Minister of Environment

Chief Administration Secretary Ministry of Environment

Governor Wilbur Ottichillo

Madame Olushola Olayide

Dr. James Kinyangi

Mithika Mwenda

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my honor, on behalf of the Chief Economist and Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Dr. Abdallah Hamdok, and representing the African Climate Policy Centre to first extend our gratitude to the government of Kenya for hosting this meeting, and to say a few words of welcome to the 7th Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA – VII).

The CCDA is an initiative of the ClimDev-Africa initiative, a tripartite programme of the AUC, the AfDB and UNECA. It was conceived as a physical dialogue place to promote interaction between science and policy on issue related to the climate change-development nexus.

Climate change poses undoubtedly the greatest risk to the realization of the ideals of agenda 2063 and the SDGs. The IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels is unequivocal. Launched in South Korea on Monday 8th October, the report concludes, inter alia, that

1. Climate change is happening at a rate much faster than previously estimated. Global warming is outstripping all our efforts to resolve it.
2. The impacts of global warming are also already much greater than predicted, particularly in developing countries.
 - a. In order to avoid passing the 1.5 degrees guardrail, we need to reduce emissions by 45% by 2030 – we have under 12 years to achieve that.
 - b. And to have a 50% chance of staying within the 1.5 degrees threshold the world must become carbon neutral by 2050, in only in only 32 years.

3. Avoiding a catastrophe will require a major transformation of society and the world economy on an unprecedented scale
4. Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees will cost \$2.4 trillion of investments in the global energy system every year between 2016 – 2035 (this is equivalent to 2.5% of world GDP). The cost of not doing anything will be much, much higher.

But it is not all doom and gloom. The report also concludes that

“Anthropogenic emissions up to the present are unlikely to cause further warming of more than 0.5°C over the next two to three decades (high confidence) or on a century time scale (medium confidence).”

Now, this means that there is a chance for a stable climate system which will allow for sustainable development but only if we do manage to halt emissions in the projected time frame.

So this means we are faced with two challenges. The first to halt emissions and to have an organized transition to a carbon neutral future in the shortest time possible.

And the second to restructure our economies to ensure sustainable development without further emissions.

It has been demonstrated that in addressing these challenges, there are opportunities to be harnessed. Sustainable, inclusive and equitable development which does not increase atmospheric carbon concentrations is possible. But for these opportunities to be realized, a lot needs to be done.

Our host for this meeting, the government of Kenya, has developed a sophisticated framework for the governance of climate change in the Country. The Kenya Green Economy Strategy and Implementation Plan (2016-2020) is designed to guide the country's transition to a low carbon, resource efficient, equitable and inclusive future. The plan recognizes that in order to succeed, substantial resources are required in the form of finance, investment, technology development innovation and transfer, and capacity building. It further recognizes that integration of Green Economy in the national and county planning and budgeting processes are also crucial. This is indeed a great example of how national action can be mobilized to respond to the climate change.

But the global community needs to do more to ensure that the global economy is recalibrated in order to support climate smart and carbon efficient trajectories. Every stakeholder, from national governments, the Civil society, the private sector and communities must engage in this process.

The Paris Agreement is the only framework that we have to define and guide our climate response strategies. This CCDA VII is designed to explore the potential of the Paris Agreement to achieve its objective. The key questions that we must ask are:

- Given what we know since the conclusion of the Agreement in 2015, is the Agreement in its present form capable of addressing the climate challenge
- What strategies and mechanisms can be implemented in order to increase the climate ambition of our nations
- While the Agreement is a treaty between nation states, what roles can be played by the different stakeholders in the implementation of its ambition

- What solutions can we, as Africa, bring to the table?

We are grateful to the government of Kenya for hosting us, as a gathering of scientists and policy makers, to reflect on the challenges of translating the Paris Agreement from policies into action. We are also grateful to the Pan-African Alliance for Climate Justice (PACJA) as co-host of this meeting, and especially for their role in mobilizing the massive participation of civil society from Kenya and beyond. Allow me to also acknowledge the African Development Bank and the African Union Commission, the ClimDev partners who made this meeting possible.

Finally ladies and gentlemen, esteemed colleagues, allow me to express our gratitude to each and everyone of you for making time to join in this very important meeting, and to contribute your knowledge, expertise and experience towards developing African solutions to global challenges. I look forward to enriching and productive discussions over the next three days, and am confident that we will, at the end of the meeting, have some important messages and proposals for all stakeholders.

I thank you