

## FIRST CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT FOR AFRICA (CCDA-I)

by

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Your Excellency, Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Your Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Jannet, United Nations Under Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the ECA, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission Mr. Mwencha, Your Excellency Ms. Jennifer Webster, Minister, Ministry of Finance of Guyana. Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen. Let me at the outset express my gratitude for this privilege. It is always a pleasure to be here at the ECA, and may I salute the remarkable leadership provided by Mr. Jannet in bringing all of us together and giving climate change a place in the development agenda. And I also want to compliment my colleague and friend Dr. Youba Sokona for having put together the ACPC which I think will become under Mr. Jannet's leadership an outstanding institution to ensure that in Africa we have development first, but, with full integration of concerns related to the changing climate of the planet, and certainly on this continent.

I do want to start with a tribute to the memory of a sister, a great leader, Dr. Wangari Maathai who lost her life after a long battle with cancer a few weeks ago. I offer a tribute to her memory and her great achievements. And I really think we need an amalgamation of international organizations, of governments, of business and industry, and leaders of civil society to be able to deal with this enormous challenge of climate change. More so, perhaps in Africa, where institutions are still insipid and still developing, more so than perhaps in

other parts of the world. Now here, let me start by quoting something from the 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report of the IPCC where we said, and I quote "Adaptive capacity is intimately connected to social and economic development but is unevenly distributed across and within societies." This is a reality that we must keep in mind, because as Mr. Janneh reminded us, we really need to revisit Africa's development strategies. And these development strategies should not, and must not be a replica of what we have seen in other parts of the world. I think the challenges that Africa faces are unique. It also has assets, it has opportunities that are unique, and therefore, it is critically important that when we're devising strategies for development on this continent, we bring in the intellectual capabilities by which we can set directions that would suit the societies and the diversity of this continent as effectively as possible.

And in this regard, I think one important objective, would be to see, that development is made truly sustainable. Now sustainable development is a term, which of course is used loosely and glibly in several fora but we have not been able to translate it into practice, and yet it is critically important that we do so without too much delay, in every part of the world. And here in Africa when they're still investing in infrastructure, investing in those assets that are going to set the direction of economic activities in the future, we keep the issue of sustainability clearly in focus. And here again, the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC stated something, and I quote "Making development more sustainable can enhance mitigative and adaptive capacity, reduce emissions, and reduce vulnerability." So in other words, it is essential, to see that development is sustainable, because that would ensure that we use natural resources including energy as efficiently as possible, and it would also reduce vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change to which this continent certainly needs to pay special attention.

Now sustainable development as everyone knows, comes from the very simple but extremely effective definition that came from the Brundtland Commission; it is that form of development which helps to meet the needs of the present generation, without compromising on the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. And this clearly means that the services that ecosystems provide, the assets that we have, the wealth that we have in the form of natural resources are conserved, and are kept intact, so that the benefits and the opportunities that we have from these resources in our generation are not

diminished for the use of future generations. I think, rightly, Mr. Janneh told us that we need to link policy with practice. And I think often you'll find a gap, where we might lay down policies that clearly targets development and sustainable development in particular, but we seldom think of the institutions, the regulatory and governance measures by which one can link these policies with practice. And therefore I think we have to simultaneously ensure that while we set new directions and we set new priorities for development, we also put in place the institutional measures that would make this a reality in practice.

I would like to highlight one important need, particularly as far as climate change is concerned, and that is the need for carrying out detailed scientific assessment. Now the design of this conference clearly pays adequate attention to this requirement. But in my view, given the fact that in Africa we really haven't had adequate research in the field of climate change, it is vitally important that we set up partnership arrangements, because we all live on planet earth, we all are inhabitants of spaceship earth. What happens in Africa cannot remain isolated to Africa alone. It is in the vital interest of the global community, to see that climate change and the impacts of climate change are adequately addressed, so that the vulnerabilities of communities and locations in Africa are not in any way ignored in whatever efforts we make. To that extent therefore, I think it is critically important that we come up with scientific assessment of what the impacts of climate change are going to be in different regions of Africa. Because it is only on that basis that we would be able to come up with policies which could be integrated with development directions, and by which we would be able to set in place actions, and develop institutions to deal with the impacts of climate change.

I'd like to mention what the IPCC has done in a very modest way. We received the Nobel Prize money in 2008 and there were all kinds of suggestions on what to do with it. Not a very large sum of money, given the challenge that we face! But, we took the deliberate decision to see that the money - and possibly by harnessing some other resources - we can offer a set of scholarships or fellowships to scientists and researchers from the least developed countries and most definitely from Africa, so that scientific capabilities and capacities could be developed in that regard. And I am happy to say that the first lot of such scholarships has recently been announced and are beginning, and we hope we can build on

this very small and modest effort because it is critically important to create scientific capacity as a forerunner to setting policies in place that would help.

Now, I'd like to mention just one more set of issues for your consideration, and I would say for the consideration of the rest of the world. It is crucial that the rest of the world listens to the voice of Africa, because, here again, may I say that as we mentioned in the Fourth Assessment Report, many impacts can be reduced, delayed or avoided by mitigation and mitigation efforts and investments over the next two or three decades will have a large impact on opportunities to achieve lower stabilization levels. And the world therefore must realize the urgency and the importance of mitigation. There is little that Africa by itself can do, but the rest of the world has to understand the importance of urgent and adequate mitigation measures, or else, as I've just mentioned, these impacts will not be reduced, will not be delayed, and will not be avoided. And the worst sufferers of those impacts will certainly be on this continent. And I think the world must understand their responsibility in taking adequate steps. Here may I say, that in the Fourth Assessment Report we have clearly come up with an assessment, that the least cost path of mitigation for the world if we want to stabilize temperature increase to say between 2.0°– 2.4°C we require that carbon dioxide emissions peak no later than 2015. Now that's barely four years away. We also found in the AR4, the Fourth Assessment Report that "By 2030 there would be 6 gigatonnes of negative cost opportunities for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases worldwide in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent". So this clearly means that there are institutions and other barriers that have prevented the world from taking steps that are actually negative cost measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. And I was happy to hear from Mr. Janneh that the initiative is going to be to see that Africa engages actively in the negotiations in the field of climate change. Because I think the rest of the world must look at opportunities by which they can bring about quick and low cost, as a matter of fact negative cost, mitigation of emissions of greenhouse gases.

So I'd like to and here. I'll have much more to say in a later session but I just wanted to highlight some of these issues and I want to compliment and thank Mr. Janneh for the leadership that he is providing in this area, and I think in such a critical area of human endeavor, all of us have to work together because as I said earlier, and as we were reminded by that great economist Kenneth Boulding we're all inhabitants of spaceship

earth and we have nowhere else to go but to make this planet a much better place, a sustainable place for us, our children and their grandchildren and their children. Thank you very much.

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