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[Home](#) > The Africa Pavilion at COP21 officially opens on a high note

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Paris, France, 1 December 2015 (Joint ECA,AUC,AfDB *Press Release*) - Africa today sent an unequivocal message of solidarity and unity of purpose at the official opening of the Africa Pavilion at the UNFCCC COP 21 in Paris. Speaking at the high level opening, President Yayi Boni of Benin, was resolute that the Africa is not at the negotiating table with a begging bowl.

He told the audience at the Africa high level event marking the launch of the Africa Pavilion that "Africa did not come here (COP21) to beg for money or assistance but to bring about commitment of all concerned to Africa's adaptation needs"

"The adaptation and mitigation needs of the continent are not aid" President Boni said, but an equity issue because climate change is a global phenomenon not caused by Africa. "The time to act is now" he said "the house is burning."

In Africa, climate change constitutes a major threat to the continent's development, and has major implications and impacts on African economies. Climate extremes such as drought, flooding, heat waves and tropical cyclones are intensifying in frequency and intensity. Rising sea levels will threaten Africa's large coastal population with agriculture, tourism, cities, water levels, health, energy and fisheries all likely to be impacted by the adverse impacts of climate change. COP 21 marks a decisive stage in negotiations of the future international agreement on climate change.

The high level panel at the official opening constituted the African Heads of State and Government, African Parliamentarians and the principals of the four pan-African institutions namely: the African Union Commission, (AUC); the African Development Bank, (AfDB); the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA); and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

"Africa's message for this Summit is clear: we need a legally binding agreement with a global governance framework, applicable to all parties that balances the issues of adaptation, mitigation, provide adequate finance as well as technology development and transfer. The new Agreement must commit to reduction of greenhouse emissions to achieve well below 2 degree Celsius, ensure the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, social justice, equity and African must speak with one unified voice", African Union Commission Chairperson, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, urged the high level dignitaries.

The Chairperson also noted the fact that Africa's commitment to define African development path for the next 50 years in *Agenda 2063: The Africa we Want* as a sustainable and low carbon path. "Through Agenda 2063 we want to ensure not only that we mitigate and adapt to climate change, but also do so in a manner that build African capacities, researches, institutions and most importantly - whether it is in agriculture and agro-processing or in renewable energy - to

ensure that these initiatives contribute towards development on the continent, creating the much needed livelihoods and jobs for our young people and women”, she emphasized. (The complete speech of the Chairperson is available on www.au.int ^[1] .

Mr. Adesina Akinwumi, President of the African Development Bank stressed that “COP21 can only be considered successful if it meets the needs of our continent. Africa is the continent suffering the most from the scorching heat from rising temperatures and droughts have become more frequent and with greater intensity than ever before. Africa needs more money for adaptation. The continent has been short changed by climate change. But we must ensure that it is not short changed by climate finance. AfDB will triple its climate finance to \$5 billion a year by 2020.”

While the CEO of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), Mr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, commended the collaborative approach of the four institutions for providing leadership in setting up the Africa Pavilion. The institutions should continue to work together in promoting Africa’s socio-economic development.

He emphasized that “Africa must continue to advocate for an agreement that reaffirms the obligations of developed country Parties for the provision of climate finance which is additional, predictable and sustainable, with the agreement providing for a continuous assessment of scale of funding needed compared to climate finance available, particularly from public sources, and include a clear burden-sharing process for calculating the contributions to be made by developed country parties”.

In Africa, renewable energy systems offer an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate the transition to modern energy services and to increase energy access. This has a ripple effect on job creation, women empowerment and economic development.

This was reinforced by Mr. Carlos Lopes, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) who said Africa is well endowed with all forms of renewable energy resources – hydropower, solar, wind, geothermal, biomass and even marine energy. “Yet, today we are in a situation where the total installed electricity capacity in Africa is only about 160 gigawatts. By comparison, this is just over half of Japan’s installed capacity. If we take out North Africa and South Africa, the installed capacity in the rest of Africa is less than that of South Africa. Given the abundant renewable energy resources of Africa, the energy mix of the continent is still dominated by fossil fuels (gas, coal and oil), with renewables making only 22% of the installed capacity, dominated by hydropower.”

During the event, the African Renewable Energy Initiative, a transformative, Africa-owned and Africa-led inclusive effort to accelerate and scale up the harnessing of the continent’s huge renewable energy potential was presented by Mr. Khaled Al Fahmy, Minister of Environment of Egypt and President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN).

Under the mandate of the African Union, and endorsed by the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), the Initiative is set to achieve at least 10 GW of new and additional renewable energy generation capacity by 2020, and mobilize the African potential to generate at least 300 GW by 2030.

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