



SPEECH BY DR. MITHIKA MWENDA

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At the Opening Ceremony of the 6th Africa Climate Talks & SDGs Forum

7 April 2025 | Kampala, Uganda

Honourable Ministers, Esteemed Colleagues, Distinguished Guests, Friends and Partners,

Good morning.

It is an honour and a privilege to speak to you at the 6th Africa Climate Talks and Regional SDGs Forum here in the vibrant city of Kampala. This gathering, as you know, is not just another entry on the climate calendar. It is a declaration. A convening of conscience. A forum of the future. And most importantly, it is a space of justice.

We meet under the theme: “Rethinking Financing and Ambition for Climate Action, Green Growth and Development in Africa: A Justice Issue.” These words are not chosen lightly. They speak to the heart of our struggle—a struggle to make Africa visible, valuable, and vocal in the global climate discourse.

Because let us be clear: climate change is not a mere technical challenge. It is a profound injustice. Africa contributes least to the problem but suffers first and worst from its impacts. And despite all the promises, all the pledges, all the pronouncements, we continue to be shortchanged.

At COP29 in Baku, the world agreed on a New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance. Three hundred billion dollars per year sounds like a large sum—until you remember that Africa, through the Africa Group of Negotiators, called for \$1.3 trillion annually to respond meaningfully to the climate emergency. We were told to be realistic. But our reality is this: floods, droughts, cyclones, collapsing healthcare systems, and shrinking economic prospects. If that is not worth \$1.3 trillion, what is?

The outcomes from Baku are a painful reminder that global climate diplomacy remains shaped by power, not principles. The promises of common but differentiated responsibilities—enshrined in Rio and reiterated in Paris—remain elusive. The dream of equity remains deferred. And the mechanisms of finance continue to reward those who have polluted the most, not those who need it the most.

And now, in 2025, we must also contend with a shifting global order—one in which even traditional champions of climate ambition, like the United States, appear to be retreating. The growing anti-climate posture in Washington threatens to unravel the fragile trust that underpins global cooperation. If the world’s largest historical emitter begins to walk away, what message does that send to those of us already standing in the floodwaters?

But while we must continue to demand justice, we must also prepare to define it for ourselves.

Africa cannot afford to wait for fairness to be handed down from Geneva or New York or Bonn. We must build justice from the ground up. That is why these talks are important. They are a space to reshape ambition—not in terms of emissions alone, but in terms of opportunity, dignity, and sovereignty.



Friends,

The new climate economy is being built. Whether Africa benefits—or is again left behind—depends on the choices we make now. We must shift from extractive models of development to regenerative ones. From elite-driven agendas to people-centred strategies. From begging for crumbs to claiming our share.

And yes, we must demand reparations—not as charity, but as a matter of justice.

In 2025, as the world turns its gaze to COP30 in Brazil and the Africa Climate Summit, we must go forward as one. United. Coordinated. Ambitious. These talks are a staging ground for that unity.

Over the next two days, we will reflect on the road from Baku to Belem. We will interrogate the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage and ask whether it truly serves African priorities. We will explore how WASH, health, gender, and decent work intersect with our climate ambition. We will revisit the political economy of energy transitions and unpack the contested terrain of climate finance.

And we will do so with one lens: **justice.**

Justice that places African people—not just African governments—at the center of solutions. Justice that recognizes the rights of indigenous communities, youth, women, and frontline defenders. Justice that insists that ambition must be matched by finance, not framed by it.

Colleagues,

Let us use this moment to reaffirm our solidarity. Let us speak boldly, think deeply, and act strategically. Because we are not here to warm seats. We are here to shape the future.

And that future must be just. It must be African. And it must begin now.

Thank you.