

ETHIOPIA'S STATEMENT AT THE OPENING OF THE CLIMATE  
IMPLEMENTATION SUMMIT OF COP27

**Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

From the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for inviting me to participate in the Sharm El-Sheikh Climate Implementation Summit and for the warm hospitality accorded to me and my delegation since our arrival in the beautiful city of Sharm El-Sheikh.

I would also like to congratulate the government of the Arab Republic of Egypt and its people for successfully hosting COP27.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

As a global community, we are relentlessly challenged by the threat of climate change. East Africa has suffered repeated droughts and floods. Ethiopia is in the eye of the storm.

Nonetheless, we are turning our challenges into opportunities. We are building on our people's resilience and safeguarding our natural assets while striving to provide our citizens and the region with reliable, accessible, and affordable renewable energy.

There have been three significant areas where we have made rapid and considerable progress in combating climate change through our ambitious climate action and a green pathway for growth and prosperity. These areas include afforestation, reforestation, and green legacy; ascertaining food sovereignty; and green energy transition.

These are important topics of discussion under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which are part of the African climate agenda.

Ethiopia aligns her position with the collective interests and statements of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) as well as the Group of 77 and China coalition to create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity at the United Nations on matters relating to climate change.

As one of its key pillars, our ten-year development plan is anchored on building climate resilient green economy. Ethiopia has submitted its ambitious updated nationally determined

contribution (NDC) that integrates mitigation and adaptation interventions and is well aligned with the long-term 1.5-degree Celsius target of the Paris Agreement.

In accordance with the Paris Agreement, Ethiopia has also prepared its Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDS), which aims to put Ethiopia on a path towards net-zero emissions by 2050. This long-term strategy will be launched here at the COP27.

***On the afforestation, reforestation, and the Green Legacy:***

We all agree that protecting our natural capital is an integral part of the climate agenda. Restoring natural land and forests significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Ethiopia's Green Legacy is our proud contribution to this effort, and it strengthens our nationally determined contributions.

Four years into the implementation of the Green Legacy Initiative, we have planted 25 billion seedlings, equivalent to 250 seedlings per Ethiopian. The impact could be equated to removing 64 million gasoline-powered cars from the roads for a whole year.

Today, the Green Legacy Initiative is the most extensive afforestation and reforestation program next to the Amazon. Besides the tree planting afforestation and reforestation efforts, Ethiopia has also put over 700,000 hectares of existing biodiversity and carbon-rich natural forests under a sustainable participatory forest management scheme.

The Green Legacy has fostered a flourishing national green culture and has tripled nurseries to more than 120,000, and seedlings have been shared with the neighboring countries to bolster regional cooperation for transboundary ecosystem management.

Our Green Legacy Initiative will certainly contribute towards removing hundreds of millions of tons of carbon dioxide equivalent from the atmosphere and reduce deforestation, implying Ethiopia's significant contribution to the global climate change mitigation efforts.

Ethiopia's tangible contribution to the overall afforestation and reforestation pledge is impressive by any standard, but even more so when it has been financed primarily by domestic resources and efforts. Building on this success, Ethiopia plans to restore an additional 22 million hectares of degraded land by 2030. We are also developing a green fund and will pursue carbon trading schemes to help raise additional financing.

***On the loss and damage, and building resilience through ascertaining food sovereignty:***

Although Ethiopia is considered one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, seasonal food insecurity is an ongoing challenge.

Over the last few years, we have successfully demonstrated that building resilience and protecting people's livelihoods is possible. With the Green Legacy, 1 in 50 seedlings is set to improve food security and income generation. In addition, 500 million plants are fruit-bearing, producing Papayas, Mangoes, and Avocados.

Ethiopia has also recorded success with its wheat production program this year. About 2.5 million tons of wheat were produced utilizing the climate SMART irrigation system in the dry season. We aim to cultivate 2 million hectares in 2023 during the dry season alone, paving the way for food self-sufficiency and wheat export in the coming year.

My government is committed towards building climate-resilient regenerative agriculture and food system transformation that will increase food production, promote health and nutrition, protect our valuable land and natural resources, and protect the most vulnerable communities.

***Finally, on the green energy transition:***

Ethiopia seized the opportunity to capitalize on its significant renewable energy potential. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is expected to be an essential energy source for the country and the region. Although Ethiopia has considerable renewable energy potential and has developed substantial generation and transmission infrastructure, the electricity access rate is still below 50%.

We are working hard to expand and diversify the energy mix to include other renewable energy sources such as geothermal, wind, and solar, and we aim to achieve universal access through on-grid and off-grid technologies by 2030.

In the spirit of advancing partnership and collaboration, Ethiopia has been exporting its green energy sources to neighboring countries, which proves our commitment to connecting countries via the emerging interconnected grid of the East African Power Pool.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

COP 27, the African COP, is an opportune moment for Africa to voice our collective stance.

Africa, with less than 5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, and about 17 percent of the total world population, is the most vulnerable to climate change. Yet, Africa only gets less than 5 percent of the world's climate fund, mainly in debt. Fighting climate change must be a collective effort and needs adequate financing.

While we are proud of the results achieved and are meeting our nationally determined targets, there is more to be done to protect our people and planet. Ethiopia is indeed in the eye of the storm. Without appropriate adaptation action, climate change could push the whole more than 100 million people below the poverty line without appropriate adaptation action by 2030. Ethiopia is on the lower end of the carbon emissions spectrum but disproportionately vulnerable to climate change.

Eight out of ten Ethiopians live in rural areas relying on erratic rain-fed subsistence farming. Those with the least contribution to climate change are hit the hardest. These inequities cannot persist.

Our home-grown economic reform program is putting the necessary investment conditions to attract more private and concessional climate financing. Nonetheless, concessional funding is imperative to scale our successes in line with the mounting challenges.

Increased financing must reflect the scale of the challenge for Africa. Countries must honor their climate pledges, provide the financing needed and address the unfinished issues of loss and damage and carbon trading mechanism in ways that allow for faster results.

It is high time to respond to the mounting financing and technological needs. Pledges must translate into new additional resources and support. The window of opportunity to avert the worst impacts of the climate crisis is closing. We need to scale our actions now.

Hopefully, Ethiopia's climate-conscious actions, green legacy, food sovereignty, and green energy will promote regional diplomacy, inspiring more nations on the continent and beyond.

At COP27, I hope we move together toward accelerated implementation. Africa demands progress for its people and the planet.