

African leaders urged to unite in addressing climate change

President Cyril Ramaphosa has called on leaders on the continent to speak with one clear voice to emphasise the primacy of multilateralism, and to express unwavering support for the full implementation of the United Nations Climate Change Convention and its Paris Agreement.



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“It is absolutely imperative that everyone must contribute their fair share if we are to limit global warming to the agreed target of well-below two degrees, build the resilience of our economies and ensure the safety and well-being of our citizens,” Ramaphosa said.

Addressing the virtual meeting of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) on Tuesday, 8 June, the president said the continent needs a strong and well-coordinated common African position.



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Development space should be respected

“We need to adopt key messages that encapsulate Africa’s aspirations, and work together in the spirit of unity and solidarity as a continent.

“We need to send a clear message that all African countries require support from international partners and that our development space should be respected to achieve our climate goals and ambitions, while contributing our fair share to the global effort,” the Ramaphosa said.

He said the continent needs recognition of its different national circumstances and capacities, as it is not realistic to expect it to meet the same timelines as developed countries to transition its economies and to disinvest from fossil fuels.

“This is important, especially given the high levels of inequality, unemployment and developmental needs across our continent, particularly among women and the youth.

“Furthermore, we need to send a clear signal that implementation and ambition apply equally to mitigation, adaptation and support. Increased ambition for action must be matched with enhanced ambition for support,” the president said.



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Transformative sustainable development

While the Covid-19 pandemic is having a profound impact on sustainable development and efforts to combat environmental degradation, it also presents opportunities for Africa to set its recovery on a path of transformative sustainable development.

“In this regard, many governments and regions are prioritising a green recovery as part of their stimulus packages to address the crisis.

“The African Green Stimulus Programme adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in December 2020 is an innovative African-led initiative to support the continent’s recovery,” the Ramaphosa said.

The African Green Stimulus Programme seeks to harness the opportunities of a green recovery through a more coordinated approach and the scaling up of resource mobilisation, capacity building and technology development.

“It is clear that Africa will need climate change, environment and sustainable development initiatives to be implemented at a much larger scale. This is not only to contribute significantly to Africa’s green recovery, but also to fully realise the Africa we want as espoused in Agenda 2063.

“We must therefore do everything within our means to ensure a successful outcome of COP26 in November this year, particularly for Africa,” said Ramaphosa.

The president chaired the virtual meeting of the CAHOSCC in his capacity as coordinator of the continental structure.

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