REPUBLIC OF KENYA

OPENING STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. WILLIAM SAMOEI RUTO, PhD, C.G.H., PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES, AT A MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE (CAHOSCC), DURING THE SUMMIT OF AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

FEBRUARY 13, 2026

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good afternoon,

1. I welcome you to this first meeting of the year of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change. I thank our hosts for convening us and for their continued leadership on this agenda.

2. We meet at an important moment for global climate action. COP30 in Belém marked 10 years since the Paris Agreement. Its message was clear: The world is still not on track, but the determination to act remains strong.

3. That resolve is grounded in lived experience. Climate impacts are intensifying across all regions of the globe. In Africa, they are already reshaping livelihoods and economies from prolonged drought in the Horn of Africa and severe floods and cyclones in the north and south to rising temperatures and erratic rainfall across the Sahel. These are no longer isolated shocks; they are persistent pressures affecting food security, fiscal stability, and social cohesion.

4. This is unfolding at a time of wider global uncertainty. A time when geopolitical alignments are shifting, and economic cooperation is increasingly organised around regional and strategic partnerships. Many countries are restructuring supply chains to strengthen domestic capacity and deepen ties with trusted partners.

5. Climate policy is also moving into the centre of economic strategy. It now influences trade, industry, and technology choices. Governments are using incentives, standards, and partnerships to advance climate objectives alongside the goals of national development and competitiveness.

6. Investment trends reflect this shift. Global energy-transition investment reached a new high of about $2.3 trillion in 2025, continuing the steady movement toward low-carbon energy systems and technologies.

7. The global economy is moving toward lower-carbon production, electrified value chains, and technology-intensive industry. In this context, reliable and affordable power is becoming a core driver of competitiveness.

8. Solar energy is now the leading area of new energy investment, with global installed capacity exceeding two terawatts. Yet Africa, despite having the strongest solar potential, accounts for less than 2% of that total.

9. This disparity presents both a risk and an opportunity. Energy systems now play a central role in economic competitiveness. How we build and finance them will shape our growth prospects.

10. Africa's vast renewable resources, expanding markets, and youthful workforce provide a strong foundation for resilience and job creation. Our task is to turn this endowment into measurable industrial value through credible project pipelines, bankable proposals, and regional value chains that can attract large-scale capital.

11. The critical foundation has already been laid. The Nairobi Declaration set a clear direction toward climate-positive growth and was reaffirmed at the Africa Climate Summit in Addis Ababa in 2025. Our climate agenda is inseparable from development, energy access, and industrialisation. The next step is disciplined implementation at scale.

12. Finance remains the central constraint. Many of you participated in the virtual leaders' meeting I convened two weeks ago, where we agreed that climate finance is still not flowing at the pace or volume required to safeguard our people and support our development pathways.

Excellencies,

13. Africa cannot afford to wait for alignment elsewhere. We must lead by placing climate priorities at the centre of our economic planning and investment decisions.

14. Last year also delivered important global outcomes that shape our path forward. The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development reaffirmed the importance of development finance, debt sustainability, and reform of the international financial architecture.

15. Continental initiatives are helping to translate ambition into action. The Accelerated Partnership for Renewables in Africa and the Africa Green Industrialisation Initiative are some of the practical vehicles for delivery, supported by the African Continental Free Trade Area. Notably, the Green Industrialisation Initiative secured commitments of $100 billion from African financial institutions at the last Africa Climate Summit.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

16. This year will be equally significant. Kenya will host several major gatherings, including the Africa-France Summit in May, the Our Oceans Conference in June, and the Africa Clean Cooking Summit in July.

17. Ethiopia will also host the Africa-Italy Summit alongside other regional and global fora across our continent. These platforms will help shape finance, standards, and investment flows relevant to our climate and development priorities.

18. COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye, will be an important checkpoint for ambition, accountability, and finance. It should also build momentum toward COP32 in 2027 to be hosted here in Addis Ababa, an opportunity to present African priorities with clarity and coherence.

Excellencies,

19. In a world where climate outcomes are influenced by markets and partnerships, Africa’s unity and strategic focus will determine our influence and impact. CAHOSCC was established for this purpose.

20. Let us use this meeting to strengthen coordination, sharpen our propositions, and position Africa as a leading destination for clean energy, green industry, and climate adaptation investment.

I thank you.

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