

## Keynote Speech Ali Mohamed, Climate Envoy of Kenya California-Africa Climate Economic Partnership Summit April 22, 2025 – San Francisco, California

**Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honour to address you today at this inaugural California-Africa Climate Economic Partnership Summit. Not so long ago, we met under the bright sun of Nairobi where we shared ideas, ambitions, and our commitment to climate action and economic partnership.

Today, we meet under the bright skies of San Francisco. The setting has changed, but our purpose remains the same: to strengthen the bonds between California and Africa, and to build a future where climate action drives shared prosperity.

Africa's ambition is clear. Through the Nairobi Declaration adopted in 2023, African leaders committed to making climate action a catalyst for development, industrialization, and economic opportunity.

And we have the essential ingredients to realise this ambition. Today, our continent is home to **1.5 billion people**, and our workforce is young, dynamic, and eager to live fulfilling lives.

The latest IMF data shows that **some of the fastest-growing economies** are now in Africa. Africa's average GDP growth has outpaced the global average over the past decade, even amid global headwinds.

Our **natural resources** are second to none: from critical minerals to vast renewable energy potential, and some of the world's most important

natural carbon sinks.

At the same time, we are building the structures to integrate our markets and industries. The **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**, now operational, is the largest free trade area in the world by number of countries. It is designed to boost intra-African trade by over **50%**, harmonizing infrastructure, trade policies, and standards across sectors.

We are also developing an **Integrated Continental Power System** that will connect energy generation across Africa, creating a backbone for industrialisation. A continent-wide system that links markets, connects supply with demand, and unlocks massive economies of scale.

Africa is indeed undergoing a profound transformation.

This is not to downplay the challenges we face; there are many. But the narrative has changed. We are laser-focused on solutions and determined to shape a climate-safe , economically vibrant future.

And our choices will have consequences for the entire world.

By 2050, Africa will host **one-quarter of the world's population**. In the space of a generation, we must not only bridge the large gaps that already exist - including for the 600 million people still without access to energy - but also build the infrastructure and resilient livelihoods for a billion more.

These are large challenges. But it is also our chance to reimagine what is possible. To build systems that are clean and resilient, free from the burdens of legacy infrastructure. To harness the knowledge and technologies of the **21th century** to leap to a sustainable, competitive future.

And we have a proven record that we can leapfrog: Kenya's leadership in mobile banking through M-Pesa revolutionized financial access. Today,

we are applying the same spirit to clean energy, agriculture, and digital technology.

Kenya, like many African nations, is already demonstrating this path forward. Today, **over 90% of Kenya's electricity comes from renewable sources**: geothermal, wind, hydro, and solar. Projects like the Lake Turkana Wind Power project, the largest in Africa, not only supply clean energy but also drive job creation and economic empowerment. We have set a high ambition for ourselves: to build 100 GW of power by 2040 to fuel modern industries and become a global hub for green markets. We aim to electrify our own **transport**, climate-proof our **agri food-chains**, expand our **industrial base** and preserve our natural ecosystems not only for a thriving tourist industry but as a vital carbon sinks for the planet.

And this is where our partnership becomes critical.

California, with its leadership in innovation, clean technology, and climate policy, is a natural and strategic partner for Africa. Your experience in scaling solar and wind energy, electrifying transport, and building resilient communities offers unique insights. And California is not only a leader in the United States, it is a global economic powerhouse, shaping the industries and technologies of the future.

We are ready to partner with California to pioneer new solutions for a green economy. And your thriving private sector will find in Africa willing partners and dynamic markets, ready to demonstrate that future-proofing the economy is not only a necessity, but a sound business investment.

The **California-Africa Climate Economic Partnership** we launch today is an opportunity to turn shared aspirations into real action. Together, we can build **renewable energy** that electrify transport, power industries and innovation hub.

We can scale **clean technology solutions** for both urban and rural communities. We can foster **research and innovation partnerships** that drive breakthroughs in adaptation and resilience.

Our partnership is mutual investment in a shared future that will deliver global benefits - for **stability**, for **growth**, and for **climate resilience**.  
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

We may be continents apart, but we face shared realities and we are united by an unbreakable spirit.

California knows firsthand the devastating impacts of climate change: wildfires, droughts, and extreme weather have reshaped your economy and communities.

In Kenya and across Africa, we confront similar risks: floods, prolonged droughts, rising temperatures, and growing threats to food security.

Yet in both places, the response has been the same: innovation, resilience, and a deep-rooted spirit of entrepreneurship.

It is these shared experiences and this shared spirit that will make our partnership strong.

The groundwork has been laid. The opportunity is clear. Let us work together to ensure that climate action fuels economic opportunity, that innovation serves development, and that cooperation bridges continents.

I thank you.





