

The 4th Climate Diplomacy Academy, 2024: Empowering Africa's Climate Leaders

- *Shaping Africa's climate future by nurturing young leaders for global action*

Nairobi, Tuesday, 18th June 2024: The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), Regional Programme Energy Security and Climate Change in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), in collaboration with Strathmore University, announces the 4th edition of the Climate Diplomacy Academy (CDA) conference in Nairobi Kenya. This event aims to equip a total of 80 young and aspiring climate change diplomats, negotiators, and policymakers from 21 countries across SSA with the essential skills and knowledge needed to drive effective climate action through diplomacy and international cooperation.

Empowering Africa's Future Climate Leaders

The CDA is designed to enhance participants' understanding of the multifaceted impacts of climate change and the critical role of climate diplomacy in addressing these challenges. By focusing on the interconnectivity between climate change, economy, migration and human security, the Academy aims to prepare a new generation of leaders capable of navigating complex global negotiations and advocating for Africa's unique needs and circumstances. Talented young individuals from across sub-Saharan Africa are given an opportunity to grow their careers and gain understanding of the intersection of climate science, policy processes, and practical application. This program enables participants to develop independent careers and gain exposure to various decision-making environments within the climate change framework, positioning them as future leaders.

The objectives and impact of the CDA are multifaceted. The program aims to bolster diplomatic capacity by strengthening the skills of young climate diplomats, ensuring Africa's representation in international climate discussions. Secondly, it strives to foster regional cooperation by promoting collaboration among participants from various SSA countries, nurturing a unified approach to addressing climate challenges and enhancing regional solidarity. The CDA focuses on enhancing policy frameworks by improving political and social structures essential for sustainable development, energy security, and climate resilience at both local and regional levels. The program is committed to driving climate adaptation and mitigation, equipping participants with strategies to address the continent's unique climate vulnerabilities.

Speaking at the launch ceremony in his keynote address, Principal Secretary, State Department for Environment and Climate Change, Kenya, Dr. Eng. Festus K. Ng'eno, PhD, MIEK called upon non-state actors and development partners to support learning and facilitate regional engagements to strengthen capacities on the critical role of climate diplomacy and international cooperation on climate action. He demonstrated Kenya's leading role in Africa in climate diplomacy. "Kenya has especially taken a leading role in galvanizing the African voices around providing home-grown solutions to the impacts of climate change. As the Chair of the Committee of African Heads of State

and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), His Excellency, President William Samoei Ruto has emphasized the need for a common joint African position as expressed in the African Leaders' Nairobi Declaration and Call to Action. Kenya has also been recently elected to Chair the African Group of Negotiators and will leverage on this role and the AGN platform to continue playing the leading role to spearhead an African Common Position on Climate Change and ensure Africa speaks with one voice in global climate change negotiations."

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Ms. Anja Berretta, Head of Programme, KAS-Regional Programme Energy Security and Climate Change, emphasized the urgency of international cooperation to address the impacts of climate change. "The consequences of climate change can be felt everywhere. Due to a low level of resilience and economic reliance on rainfed agriculture in most sub-Saharan countries, the continent is especially vulnerable to unpredictable and extreme weather events. The fulfilment of the Paris Agreement to reduce global warming requires international cooperation, and every country needs to demonstrate its strong political commitment to honour the agreement. I congratulate African countries who have demonstrated that they are ready to take political leadership in climate change negotiations," stated Berretta.

Prof. Izael Da Silva, Deputy Vice Chancellor - Research and Innovation at Strathmore University and the UNESCO Chair for Climate Change Resilience and Sustainability, let his support for the establishment of a network of future leaders. He highlighted the role of sustained policy-making and diplomatic relations across Sub-Saharan Africa in fostering these new leaders. "The participation of young individuals in the Climate Diplomacy Academy marks a significant step forward. I am proud that Strathmore University is a key partner in this initiative," said Prof. Da Silva. He underscored the need for ongoing efforts to nurture this new generation of leaders who can effectively engage in international climate policy and negotiations, helping to bridge the gap in Africa's capacity to drive climate actions at both regional and national levels.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) serves as the primary global policy framework addressing climate change. However, Africa faces significant challenges due to its limited capacity to engage effectively in international climate policy discussions, hindering the advancement of climate actions at both regional and national levels. The realm of climate diplomacy and negotiations is highly technical and complex, making it difficult for new negotiators to understand the intricate details of the process, even after several years of involvement. The Climate Diplomacy academy serves to help bridge this gap.

About Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)

KAS is a German political foundation committed to promoting democratic governance and fostering democratic institutions. With over 100 offices worldwide, including 20 in SSA, KAS's Regional Programme Energy Security and Climate Change focuses on sustainable development, regional cooperation on energy security, and climate action.



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