On November 13, 2024, in Baku, Azerbaijan, President Paul Kagame delivered a powerful message to the world during his address to the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Despite the ongoing challenges faced by African nations in securing adequate funding for climate protection, Kagame reaffirmed the continent's unwavering commitment to combating climate change.

President Kagame underscored Africa's critical role in the global fight against climate change.

He acknowledged that the continent's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions remain relatively small, yet its vulnerability to the impacts of climate change is disproportionately high. "Lack of adequate funding for climate protection remains a major barrier for Africa," Kagame said. "The commitments made in previous conferences have not been fulfilled, and there has been no follow-up. This is unacceptable."

Kagame's remarks highlighted a pressing issue: the need for increased international support to help African nations mitigate their environmental impact.

The President emphasized that Africa's limited capacity for investment in large-scale environmental protection projects is a significant hurdle. Despite this, Africa remains determined to contribute to global climate solutions and reduce emissions where possible—provided there is a fair distribution of financial resources to make that possible.

The call for fairness was central to Kagame's speech. "We need to ensure that the necessary funds are equitably distributed among all nations," he said, "so that every country, regardless of its size or financial capacity, can contribute meaningfully to addressing climate change." The African continent's role in tackling the climate crisis, he noted, is not just a moral obligation but a matter of global justice.

One of the key themes at COP29 is the urgent need to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, in line with the targets set by the 2015 Paris Agreement.

However, despite significant progress in climate science and policy, the world

remains far from achieving the emissions reductions necessary to meet these targets. Discussions at the conference focused on three main pillars of climate action: **mitigation**, **adaptation**, and **finance**.

While countries around the world have made pledges to reduce their carbon footprints, the road to tangible action remains fraught with challenges. The global community has yet to make the necessary breakthroughs in technology, finance, and policy to meet the scale of the climate emergency.

For countries on the frontlines of climate change—particularly small island nations, least developed countries, and many African nations—the need for international support is urgent.

These nations are already experiencing the devastating impacts of climate change, from extreme weather events to rising sea levels and prolonged droughts. Many of these countries are calling for greater assistance in the form of climate finance and technology transfer, which are essential to their adaptation efforts.

A central issue at COP29 is the establishment of a robust mechanism to address **loss and damage**, a concern raised by many developing nations that are already bearing the brunt of climate change. As extreme weather events and rising sea levels continue to devastate communities, these nations are pushing for concrete steps to address the irreversible impacts of climate change that threaten their economies and way of life.

While COP29 is generating important discussions on these issues, the real challenge lies in translating these discussions into meaningful action.

The world’s most vulnerable nations—including those in Africa—continue to push for stronger commitments from the international community. For President Kagame, the time for vague promises and empty rhetoric is over. As he stated: “The commitments made at past conferences have not been honored. Africa cannot afford to wait any longer.”

As the conference progresses, world leaders are urged to adopt more ambitious national climate plans, accelerate the transition to renewable energy, and curb deforestation. But the ultimate measure of COP29’s success will not be in the rhetoric or pledges made, but in the tangible steps nations take in the months and years ahead.

For Africa, the stakes are high. The continent is already experiencing the harsh realities of climate change, and yet it continues to show resilience in the face of adversity. President Kagame’s call for fairness, solidarity, and greater financial commitment from wealthier nations is a crucial reminder that climate action must be inclusive if it is to succeed.

As COP29 draws to a close, the world’s focus must shift from promises to action. The success of this conference—and the future of the planet—will depend on whether nations can come together to honor their commitments, deliver the financing needed for climate solutions, and adopt the bold measures required to secure a sustainable future for all.