



African CEO Council Calls on Business Leaders to Champion Sustainability and Strengthen ESG Leadership Across Africa

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, 9 October 2026

African CEOs urged to turn sustainability commitments into measurable action through collective leadership and the African Business Sustainability Council.

New York, USA; Lagos, Nigeria. The African CEO Council is calling on chief executives, business owners and corporate leaders across Africa to place sustainability at the centre of business strategy, strengthen environmental, social and governance (ESG) leadership, and work collectively to deliver meaningful, measurable impact in communities across the continent.

As African economies pursue growth, industrialisation, investment and job creation, the business community has a critical responsibility to ensure that economic progress translates into improved livelihoods, stronger communities, responsible resource management and opportunities for future generations.

For African enterprises, sustainability is no longer simply a matter of corporate reputation or compliance. It is increasingly connected to competitiveness, access to finance, supply-chain resilience, risk management, innovation, talent development and long-term business performance. Companies that integrate responsible business practices into their operations will be better positioned to respond to evolving market expectations, investor priorities and environmental and social challenges.

Peter SaSellu, President and CEO of the African CEO Council, said African business leaders must move beyond declarations of commitment and demonstrate sustainability through decisions, investments and measurable outcomes.

“Africa needs a new generation of business leadership that understands that commercial success and social progress must reinforce each other. Our CEOs must lead not only in revenue, investment and market expansion, but also in how businesses treat people, manage resources, govern themselves and contribute to the communities in which they operate.

“Sustainability must become part of how we lead, how we invest, how we employ people, how we build supply chains and how we measure business performance. African enterprises have the capacity to be powerful drivers of inclusive growth, environmental responsibility and community development. What is required is stronger leadership, practical action and a willingness to work together.”

Why African enterprises must join forces

Many of the continent’s sustainability challenges extend beyond individual companies or national borders. Climate resilience, responsible energy use, waste management, access to sustainable finance, workforce development, ethical supply chains and community livelihoods require cooperation among businesses, financial institutions, governments, development partners and civil society.

No single company can address these challenges alone. Collective action enables enterprises to share knowledge, develop practical solutions, strengthen standards, mobilise resources and build partnerships that deliver results beyond what individual organisations may achieve independently.

African businesses also have an opportunity to shape sustainability approaches that reflect the continent's economic diversity, development priorities and business realities. This requires credible governance, sound evidence, locally relevant solutions and a commitment to internationally recognised good practices without losing sight of Africa's development needs.

The African CEO Council believes that chief executives should be at the forefront of this effort. By working together across industries and national boundaries, African businesses can help build a more competitive, resilient and responsible private sector.

The African Business Sustainability Council: A platform for collective action

To advance this agenda, the African CEO Council is promoting the **African Business Sustainability Council (ABSC)** as a platform for collaboration, knowledge-sharing, responsible business leadership and practical sustainability action across Africa.

The ABSC is intended to bring together enterprises, financial institutions, professional organisations, development partners and other relevant stakeholders committed to advancing sustainable business practices and strengthening ESG leadership.

Through collaboration, the platform aims to support participating organisations in areas including:

- **ESG leadership and governance:** Strengthening board oversight, executive accountability, ethical conduct and responsible decision-making.
- **Sustainability strategy and implementation:** Helping businesses translate commitments into practical policies, operational improvements and measurable objectives.
- **Standards, reporting and transparency:** Promoting credible disclosure, responsible data practices and alignment with relevant sustainability frameworks.
- **Sustainable finance and investment:** Encouraging partnerships and better understanding of the financing opportunities associated with responsible business transformation.
- **Capacity building and peer learning:** Creating opportunities for executives and sustainability professionals to exchange experience, develop expertise and learn from practical case studies.
- **Community impact and inclusive growth:** Encouraging business initiatives that contribute to decent work, skills development, local enterprise, environmental protection and improved community wellbeing.
- **Research, dialogue and advocacy:** Generating African business insights and enabling constructive engagement on policies and market conditions that support sustainable enterprise.

The Council sees the ABSC as a practical mechanism for turning shared ambition into coordinated action. Its success will depend on the commitment of participating organisations to contribute expertise, build partnerships, implement initiatives and report progress honestly.

From ESG commitments to measurable community impact

The African CEO Council encourages businesses to evaluate sustainability not only through policies and reports, but also through the tangible changes their activities produce.

This may include creating quality employment, expanding opportunities for women and young people, investing in workforce skills, improving occupational health and safety, reducing waste and emissions, strengthening local supply chains, promoting ethical procurement and supporting community-led development initiatives.

Enterprises should identify priorities relevant to their sectors and operations, establish realistic targets, assign responsibility at executive and board levels, and monitor progress against meaningful indicators.

For companies at an early stage of their sustainability journey, the priority should be to establish sound governance, understand their most significant impacts and risks, and develop a practical improvement plan. For more advanced organisations, the challenge is to deepen implementation, strengthen accountability and extend responsible practices throughout their value chains.

The objective is not merely to increase the number of sustainability statements issued by African companies. It is to encourage better business decisions and demonstrable progress for workers, customers, suppliers, communities and the environment.

A call to African chief executives

Mr. SaSellu emphasised that sustainability leadership must begin at the top of the organisation and become embedded in everyday business decisions.

“We invite African CEOs to recognise sustainability as a leadership responsibility and a strategic business priority. We cannot leave the future of our communities, our natural resources and our economies to isolated initiatives or voluntary statements without implementation.

“Through the African Business Sustainability Council, we want to encourage African enterprises to join forces, share practical solutions, build meaningful partnerships and demonstrate that responsible business can contribute to competitive enterprises and stronger communities.

“Our call is simple: let us move from individual commitments to collective action, from good intentions to measurable results, and from isolated projects to lasting impact. Africa’s business leaders have an opportunity to help shape a future in which enterprise growth, responsible governance and community wellbeing advance together.”

The African CEO Council invites eligible businesses and institutions to explore participation in the African Business Sustainability Council, contribute expertise, support collaborative programmes and help build a stronger culture of responsible enterprise across Africa.

The Council also encourages business associations, financial institutions, investors, development organisations and sustainability professionals to work with the platform in developing practical initiatives that address shared challenges and support long-term economic and social progress.

Africa’s sustainability transition will require investment, innovation, accountability and cooperation. Above all, it will require business leaders prepared to lead by example and to measure their success not only by the value they create for their organisations, but also by the positive contribution they make to the societies in which they operate.

African CEO Council

For enquiries and partnership opportunities:

Email: press@africanceocouncil.org | Website: www.africanceocouncil.org