



2025 ELAAD PHASE 2 LAUNCH

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER SPEECH

Acknowledgements

- Vice Chancellor Professor Margaret Hutchinson
- Dean, Professor Jack Odhiambo
- Professor Patrick Maluki
- Associate Professor David Mickler, Co-Chair of the Australia Africa Universities Network
- Members of the Australia Africa Universities Network
- Fellows, supporters and partners of the ELAAD program
- Distinguished guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning

It is a great pleasure to be back at this significant and august institution in Kenya, the University of Nairobi, and to be part of the launch of Phase II of the Emerging Leaders in Australia-Africa Diplomacy Program - ELAAD. I thank the University of Nairobi for hosting this important event.

This is a fantastic initiative. Its aim of bringing together scholars and practitioners from our two continents has the potential to significantly enhance Australia Africa

literacy and deepen collaboration through the exchange of knowledge, ideas, deeper networks and understanding of international diplomacy.

ELAAD takes a long term, strategic approach. The investment you're making now will pay dividends in the decades to come. And for that commitment and strategic foresight I thank you and all who are contributing their time and energy to ensure ELAAD's success.

It's the right thing to be doing, and at the right time.

There's no doubt that, right now, the world is facing some of the most challenging international dynamics and complex foreign policy issues of our time.

The multilateral system is under extreme pressure. The UN is dealing with a funding crisis.

Conflicts including in Ukraine and the Middle East are of global significance.

In this region, there are 17 million people displaced by conflict and food insecurity.

These are enormous challenges.

But Australia's commitment to international diplomacy is unwavering.

We are concerned by the significant disruption we're seeing and we have been calling for de-escalation and dialogue to resolve conflict.

Our commitment to the multilateral system is a key pillar of our foreign policy. We are a steadfast supporter of having clear global rules and norms to protect our sovereignty and prosperity.

Rules and norms require deep policy thinking and technical knowledge. Many experts are involved around the world, including here in Nairobi through forums such as the UN Environment Programme. In UNEP, for example, member states recently agreed to establish a Science Policy Panel to ensure that the best science is available to inform member states as they deliberate on global environmental issues. This is a significant initiative agreed by member states.

But there is no doubt that reform is needed to the UN and the multilateral system, and we support meaningful, lasting reforms to safeguard what matters most, not just for us but also for our partners.

So we strongly support the UN80 process and efforts by the Secretary General to make essential reforms to the UN system including through efficiency measures and structural improvements.

Even under stress, cooperation between countries is still the best way to achieve outcomes in key areas like health, peace and security, standards and trade.

And we can point to progress and achievements happening right now:

- . member states are still coming together to negotiate on important issues, such as treaties including the plastics treaty that is being discussed right now in Nairobi
- . the UN General Assembly in September will convene to consider peace and security and development issues of global significance
- . COP30 will take place in November to focus on the global response to climate change challenges

- . South Africa is hosting the G20 this year
- . NATO countries held a successful meeting just last month
- . countries are working together to broker peace – the Rwanda DRC agreement just signed is an example of that.

Through its extensive network of universities, the AAUN is contributing knowledge sharing and innovation on many of the international challenges we face. Just recently in May, AAUN met in Kigali to grapple with the challenges of artificial intelligence.

I want to commend once more the AAUN for its effort and the energy and ideas it brings to the global development and diplomacy agenda, through an Australia-Africa lens. I'm a big fan and I hope that the network will continue to grow.

The ELAAD joins the program of initiatives spearheaded by the AAUN and its members.

And so for the emerging research leaders who will participate in this program, lucky you! And I also want to encourage you to lean in. The future of our countries and our planet matter. Your intellect, your creativity and your collaboration can have an impact. Your ideas matter.

ELAAD is a space for collaboration, connection and learning. You will engage with experts, challenge assumptions, and co-create solutions. You'll build friendships for life and potentially partnerships that in future could help to shape our world.

And to all of you – the partners, supporters and leaders – let's really get behind this initiative and support these emerging leaders. Let's work together to identify people who can contribute meaningfully to this next cohort and the ones to come.

Let's invest together in the growth of this great initiative, and use it as another valuable platform to champion diplomacy, partnership and peace.

And let's celebrate this fantastic program and hope that it will continue to grow and be supported into the future.

It's now my great honour to officially launch the Emerging Leaders in Australia-Africa Diplomacy Program Phase II.

And congratulations again to everyone involved.

Asantini Sana.