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Key messages from the twelfth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 30 August to 2 September 2024

Note by the secretariat

The annex to the present note sets out key messages of the twelfth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa, convened by the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission in the margins of the tenth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN). The key messages constitute technical input for the tenth special session of AMCEN and are provided to the AMCEN members for information purposes.

Annex

Key messages from the twelfth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 30 August to 2 September 2024

Noting that the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will take place in Baku from 11 to 22 November 2024,

Welcoming the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032), which provides a comprehensive framework for coordinated climate action across the continent,

Alarmed by the increasing frequency and severity of climate change impacts, which have disproportionate effects on African economies and societies, with countries estimated to be losing on average 2–5 per cent of gross domestic product and many countries diverting up to 9 per cent of their budgets from investment in critical services, such as health, education and other social services, to unplanned responses to address the effects of climate extremes,

Concerned that the African continent warmed at a rate of 0.3°C per decade between 1991 and 2023, slightly faster than the global average,

Noting that, in sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that climate change adaptation will cost between 30 billion and 50 billion United States dollars per year over the next decade, equivalent to 2–3 per cent of regional gross domestic product,

Concerned that many developed countries have consistently failed to honour their commitment to providing adequate and predictable climate finance owing to the inadequacy of the current global financial architecture to deliver meaningful climate and development,

Recognizing the potential of high integrity and inclusive carbon markets as an additional source of climate finance, while acknowledging that carbon markets are supplementary to domestic mitigation efforts,

Concerned about the limited investments in weather and climate observation infrastructure, early warning systems, and climate research in Africa,

Noting that gender, intergenerational equity and justice are vital to address the inequalities of the climate emergency in Africa,

Mindful of the urgent need to invest in youth innovation and entrepreneurship, local communities and indigenous climate solutions,

Welcoming regional initiatives, including the Africa Adaptation Initiative, the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Platform, the Africa Climate Resilient Investment Facility, Climate Research for Development for Africa, the Climate Action Window of the African Development Fund and the Africa Carbon Markets Initiative,

Key messages

1. Urge member States to participate actively in climate negotiations, advocating for the continent's needs and priorities, including adequate, predictable and accessible climate finance;
2. Ensure that all African countries establish and implement robust national adaptation plans by 2025, in line with the continent's priorities of climate change adaptation and climate-resilient development, as reflected in their nationally determined contributions and long-term low-emission development strategies;
3. Advocate that developed countries fulfil their responsibility to provide climate finance, adhering to the polluter pays principle, while ensuring that such finance is grant-based and primarily supports adaptation;
4. Call for an increase in adaptation finance for Africa and for its prioritization within the new collective quantified goal, ensuring that such finance is debt-free, easily accessible to both governments and communities and based on assessed needs;

5. Emphasize the importance of substantially scaling up adaptation investments in order to seize opportunities for job creation, green growth and the prevention of losses on the continent, and to urge the provision of adequate financing, faster technology transfer and capacity-building, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities;
6. Request developed countries to deliver on their financial commitments to support Africa in controlling climate change and call upon African governments to enhance efforts to mobilize domestic resources;
7. Advocate for urgent reform of the global financial architecture to ensure it is fit for purpose, including enhancing access to global climate funds, such as the Green Climate Fund and the new fund for responding to loss and damage;
8. Strongly advocate for the prioritization of grant-based financing rather than loans, especially for adaptation projects, to avoid imposing a repayment burden on financially strained countries;
9. Assert that any loans provided to Africa for climate financing should be credited as Africa's contribution to global climate action;
10. Encourage member States and development partners to work together to leverage limited public resources in innovative ways to mobilize the investments needed for climate action, including through mechanisms such as carbon markets, green and blue bonds, blended finance and climate risk insurance, ensuring that they are gender-sensitive and inclusive of marginalized groups;
11. Call for the integration of adaptation investments with other investments, such as those for climate change mitigation and social infrastructure, and challenge the misconception that adaptation is not "investment ready" to ensure that predictable finance is channelled towards adaptation;
12. Encourage the use of trade tools, including World Trade Organization agreements and regional trading blocs, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area, to direct investment to adaptation efforts;
13. Urge member States to domesticate the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2032) at the national and subregional levels to accelerate climate action, and to promote the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program as a reflection of the continent's commitment to effective climate action ahead of the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
14. Emphasize that, as Africa transitions to low-emission development pathways, global trade policies and finance flows should contribute to reducing structural, socioeconomic and technological inequalities between developed and developing countries, ensuring that a "just transition" contributes to reducing energy poverty;
15. Integrate the reduction of emissions from deforestation and land degradation into Africa's just transition, recognizing the importance of forest restoration to the global goal of greenhouse gas emission reduction;
16. Advocate for local manufacturing, funding and skills development at country and regional levels to support Africa's energy transition, urging policymakers and the global community to rethink how climate change risk can be utilized to drive inclusive economic growth and accelerate the industrialization of low-carbon energy technologies on the continent;
17. Collaborate with development partners, multilateral development banks and the private sector to invest in climate information services and national and regional early warning and action systems to improve adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies;
18. Encourage the design of innovative, home-grown climate solutions to foster sustainable and inclusive green growth and add value to Africa's critical minerals industry, including initiatives related to green hydrogen, green steel and aviation fuel.
19. Explore a mix of funding sources, including public, private and philanthropic investments, to enhance financial flows for climate resilience projects across Africa.
20. Leverage support to scale up project financing to develop bankable projects that address both climate change adaptation and mitigation, meeting financial, environmental, social and governance criteria, and to encourage the aggregation of small projects to increase their viability and appeal to investors.
21. Urge member States to establish specific, clear and ambitious goals for climate change adaptation and resilience, accompanied by dedicated financing plans and robust monitoring systems.

22. Ensure that African countries are prepared to absorb financing for and implement climate change adaptation programmes at scale, with clear institutional mandates, identified priority sectors, estimated adaptation costs and specific, stated adaptation goals.
 23. Improve the understanding of climate impacts and risks across Africa to better incorporate climate risks into business models and investment decision-making for climate change adaptation and resilience.
 24. Advocate for the global goal on adaptation, to emphasize and promote the application of context-specific indicators that accurately reflect regional vulnerabilities and adaptation needs;
 25. Encourage development partners to support African countries in building capacity to develop and monitor progress indicators under the global goal on adaptation, with a focus on building skills, empowerment and creating a strong network of young leaders committed to sustainable actions;
 26. Encourage and promote South-South collaboration among African countries to scale up investments, share best practices, mobilize resources and implement cross-border adaptation strategies, while strengthening local capacities and governance structures to ensure that funding addresses community-specific needs;
 27. Request development partners to support the strengthening of Africa's data systems by investing in national meteorological and hydrological services, prioritizing the development of robust climate data and early warning systems and funding climate research to understand the impacts of climate change and propose site-specific adaptation solutions;
 28. Emphasize that the core business of carbon markets is to scale up mitigation ambition rather than to raise climate finance, ensuring that carbon credits are not misconstrued as climate finance and that the polluter pays principle is upheld;
 29. Harness opportunities through carbon market principles, ensuring that Africa's participation enhances its capacity to engage in and address accountability in carbon markets, without motivating additional emissions;
 30. Request global development partners and other regional partners to enhance Africa's capacity to engage in the entire value chain of carbon markets, from awareness-raising to developing inclusive strategies that contribute to sustainable development, monitoring, and verifying carbon credits, while also scaling up local private-sector involvement;
 31. Urge member States, with the support of development partners, to identify and implement projects that offer benefits in terms of both greenhouse gas emissions and climate change adaptation, recognizing the co-benefits of addressing them in tandem as a priority for Africa;
 32. Promote understanding of the nexus between climate change and human, animal and environmental health in Africa, integrating the gender perspective in all related efforts.
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