

# The GLOCEPS

## Policy Brief

### Advancing Africa's Climate Action Agenda at Cop29: Strategic Priorities

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#### Executive Summary

The paper advances policy discourse and roadmap for the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) under Kenya's leadership, as Africa prepares for COP 29. The brief highlights key issues that the AGN should prioritize and lobby for in the upcoming negotiations in Baku, Azerbaijan. These include (i) urgent operationalization of the Loss and Damage fund to ensure fair and timely disbursement of climate finance; (ii) the need for Africa to advocate for a just energy transition orientation that balances renewable energy investments with the continent's development aspirations; (iii) scaling of adaptation finance to support Africa's National Adaptation Plans and resilience-building efforts; (iv) developing

the African Center for Excellence on Climate Action (ACECA) as a central and reputable hub for coordinating afro-centric climate research, policy development, capacity building, and advocacy and accountability interventions and; (v) prioritizing climate-smart agriculture and sustainable food systems. Kenya's leadership of the continent needs to recognize the Baku summit as an important platform for building on lessons learned and successes achieved in previous COP meetings in order to secure equitable access to climate finance and advance concessions that are attuned to Africa's unique vulnerabilities and priorities. Collectively, these actions are essential to ensuring



that Africa's interests are safeguarded and advanced in the design and formulation of the global climate policy framework.

## Context

Climate change presents a profound threat to Africa's socio-economic development and security as it exacerbates existing vulnerabilities. As the community of nations grapple with climate change, it has become evident that Africa's unique position as the least contributor of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions yet the most affected region, necessitates a targeted and collaborative approach.

Over the last three decades, diplomatic and political efforts have been made to recognize, appreciate and address climate change through global frameworks like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). However, significant gaps remain in the practical implementation of climate agreements, particularly for developing regions like Africa.

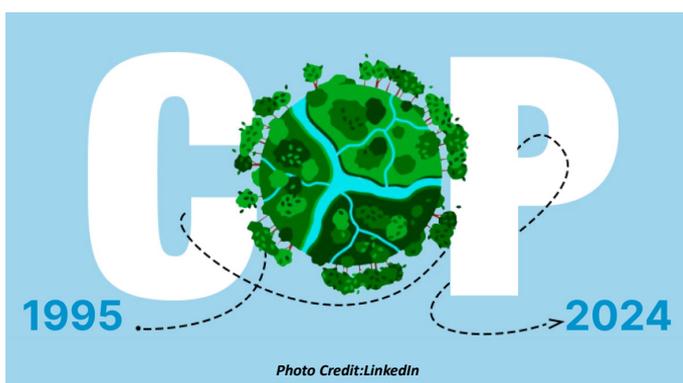
Since the inaugural COP 1 at Berlin, Germany in 1995, Africa's voice has often been fragmented along colonial, geopolitical and geo-commerce fissures. This has weakened the continent's negotiating and advocacy power in global climate forums. Kenya's current leadership of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) at COP 29 in Baku, Azerbaijan offers a rare yet scalable opportunity to unify the continent's stance and push for equitable outcomes that prioritize African realities. Equally, it

provides a formal platform for the continent to reach out and jointly lobby with other developing nations including Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Kenya's leadership comes at a pivotal moment when climate finance, loss and damage, and just energy transitions are at the forefront of global negotiations. The appointment of Kenya as the chair of the AGN provides an unprecedented platform to advocate for Africa's pressing needs in climate financing and adaptations, especially against the backdrop of historical failures by developed nations to honor and fulfill their financial and emission commitments.

At COP 29, Africa should prioritize the realization of the annual \$1.3 trillion climate finance target. Historically, developed nations have resisted fully committing to honoring the contribution. Often, they employ adversarial tactics to delay meaningful financial flows to vulnerable nations. Kenya should be cognizant of these realities in order to address requisite gaps that will mainstream accountability and transparency mechanisms for the delivery of climate finance to African countries. Failure to operationalize climate funds, such as Loss and Damage Fund and the Adaptation Fund is a continuous impediment in building a continent that is resilient against climate-induced disasters.

Deliberations at the Baku Summit are anticipated to also focus on energy transitions. For the continent, this orientation towards just energy transition must be balanced with the continent's collective economic growth and climate goals and aspirations. While COP 28 emphasized a "phase-down" of fossil fuels, African nations require more robust and inclusive agreements that consider their development needs, energy poverty realities and green energy and hydro-carbon resources. Kenya, in her role as the AGN chair, must push for a transition that does not compromise Africa's socio-economic development





## Lobbying for Equitable and Representative Financing Architecture

The current climate adaptation and development financing architecture is largely managed by International Financial Institutions (IFIs). Key entities include the Bretton Woods Institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund who are major multilateral funders of climate finance in developing countries. These funds are primarily delivered as debt-instruments that only aggravate the public debt and underdevelopment spiral in the Global South. The current arrangement reveals deep structural disparities that hinder effective climate action in developing regions, particularly Africa. While these institutions are crucial in mobilizing global funds for climate adaptation and mitigation, they equally entrench systemic issues that disproportionately affect access to climate finance for the Global South.

At the heart of these challenges is the high cost of accessing climate finance. Emerging and developing economies are systematically disadvantaged compared to their Global North counterparts. For instance, African countries often face higher borrowing costs. In some instances, they pay ten times in interest compared to developed nations. Moreover, IFIs impose stringent conditions which are often tied to political and economic requirements from Western capitals. These conditions frequently demand for governance reforms of compliance with

but instead foster investment in the continents energy resources, green industrialization and energy access.

Food security is another critical issue for the Africa that should be deliberated at COP 29. The continent's agricultural systems are highly vulnerable to climate change. This reality necessitates increased investment and technology sharing around climate-smart agriculture and resilient food systems. Moreover, securing necessary resources and partnerships is imperative. Deliberations at the inaugural Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi and COP 28 in Dubai lay the groundwork for integrating food security into the climate agenda.

Kenya's leadership of the AGN offers a unique chance to close these gaps through a singular, stronger and unified African voice. The priority areas of climate finance, just energy transition, and food security remain central to Africa's future. A focused and collaborative approach can ensure Africa secures actionable commitments and meaningful victories at COP 29. These efforts will not only bolster Africa's resilience but also lay the foundation for a more equitable global climate framework and targeted negotiations in the future.

### Key issues

The following policy priorities remain significant in mainstreaming climate change action discourses into Africa's sustainable development priorities.



policies that advance western interests at the disadvantage of African countries. Thus, African governments are often vulnerable to eternal influence through the acts and omissions by IFIs. Resultantly, many countries while needing the funds to address urgent climate risks, are deterred by the strings attached. Inevitably, delays in critical adaptation and mitigation programs abound.

The World Bank's outlay in the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) and the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust (RST) are examples of climate focused financial initiatives led by IFIs. However, despite these mechanisms, developing countries face significant financing gaps. These funds are often underfinanced and costly. Similar trends are seen in other climate funds instruments and frameworks. For example, COP 28's pledge of \$792 million to the Loss and Damage Fund and \$134 million to the Adaptation Fund remains far below the annually required \$1.3 trillion to address climate actions in developing countries. It is equally noted that the pledge made into these funds are not new or distinct. They are often replication of funding that the Global North has already pledged through other forums, and fully control their disbursements.

Imperatively, these financial shortfalls inform the stark reality considering Africa alone needs between \$290 billion and \$440 billion for loss and damage by 2030. Additionally, the continent requires

approximately \$2 trillion in green energy investment by 2050, yet less than 2% of global investment in clean and renewable energy has been channeled.

Another major impediment is the failure of the current financial architecture to align with local realities in African countries. Funding mechanisms are often opaque. Critically, there is limited transparency on the amounts and how funds are transmitted from Global North to the end-users. This lack of clarity often results in inadequate disbursement of funds to the most vulnerable communities, particularly rural and displaced communities who bear the brunt of climate change impact.

Moreover, geopolitical interests and the commercialization of indigenous knowledge further affects the equitable distribution of climate finance in Africa. In numerous instances, actors from the Global North commercialize local knowledge and innovations further perpetuating inequalities in funding allocations. The proceeds from indigenous knowledge and products are later repatriated to developed nations.

These challenges underscore the urgent need for a complete overhaul of the current IFI structure. Developing countries should lobby and play a more central role in decision-making processes and institutions. The tactical exclusion of developing countries from key decision-making bodies within IFIs has perpetuated policies that are often injurious to Africa's aspirations. To address these disparities, the AGN at COP 29 must advocate for an inclusive and participatory approach in the governance of climate finance. This will ensue that African countries have a seat at the table in shaping the rules and conditions for accessing climate finance.

Likewise, investing in African climate resilience is not just a moral imperative. It represents a strategic



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opportunity for developed nations. Climate induced challenges such as illegal migration which is driven by deteriorating livelihoods in Africa and Latin America poses increasingly significant political and economic risks to the European Union and the United States. Moreover, by investing in Africa's climate reliance and equitable financial systems, developed economies can improve their political standing and public image in the Global South, where there is growing discontent with unfulfilled climate finance promises or exploitative bilateral and multilateral relationships. Supporting Africa's global green transition and adaptation efforts can foster global stability and benefit developed economies through sustainable trade partnerships and reduced migration pressures.



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### Direct international funding of vulnerable communities

Adequate adaptation finance under the New Collective Quantified Goals (NCQG) should prioritize direct international funding so that least developed countries (LDCs) and IDS with the least responsibility for climate change are not limited in their capacity to adapt. Equally, NCQG represents a critical step to bridging the financing and accountability gaps that have long plagued climate action and hence, should better ensure funding reaches local levels, especially marginalized and vulnerable communities impacted by climate change. For Africa, these goals are essential for securing much-needed climate financé, reduce GHG emission and enhance resilience to

impacts of climate change. The NCQG framework envisages measurable and time-bound objectives that aid countries to align their climate obligations with the Paris Agreement's long-term goals. Despite the wholesale appreciation of NCQG, the AGN must prioritize key aspects that ensure Africa's unique needs and vulnerabilities are addressed under this framework.

### Universal monitor and evaluation framework for climate action commitments

Lessons from previous COP meetings including COP 28 indicates critical gaps, including the absence of a universal framework to monitor and evaluate climate action commitments. Despite various pledges, there are no operationalized mechanisms to track how well countries, particularly developing economies are meeting their climate targets. For instance, COP 28 adopted a framework on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) that was established in the 2015 Paris Agreement. The framework is meant to assess climate risks. However, its implementation has been slow. Without clear evaluation tools, it's become difficult to hold countries accountable or to gauge progress on climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. Africa's adaptation needs remain largely unmet due to insufficient financial and technical capabilities to support the continent's adaptation and resilience-building measures.



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## African Center of Excellence on Climate Action (ACECA)

Strategically, Kenya's leadership of the AGN is opportune to lobby for the creation of an African Center of Excellence on Climate Action. Its location should be in East Africa, preferably, Nairobi, allowing the Center to leverage the proximity of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The center has the innate potential in mainstreaming the institutional knowledge, advocacy and research around climate change in the continent. With the realization that most of African indigenous knowledge on climate action is getting lost, ACECA would revitalize research on the same and enhance Africa's capacity to also track the implementation of NCQG, while providing technical assistance and foster regional collaborations.

## Strategic Partnerships for Climate Action

Another lesson from past COPs is the importance of strategic partnerships, particularly with SIDS. These countries share many of Africa's vulnerabilities to climate change, and this can strengthen the continent's voice and voting numbers in demanding greater financial commitment from developed nations. Collaborative efforts would strengthen advocacy for an equitable allocation and distribution of climate finance, especially in light of the disproportionate effects of climate change on numerous developing countries.

## Funds for loss, damage and adaptation

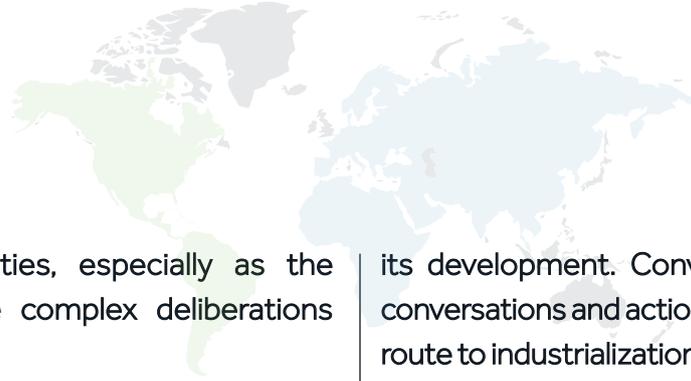
Additionally, AGN should advocate for an increased allocation of funds under the NCQG framework to focus on loss, damage and adaptation. Historically, financial flows and deliberations have been heavily skewed to mitigation efforts. Often, this perspective sidelines Africa's urgent need for adaptation. To avert repeating mistakes of past COPs, AGN must press for a more balanced approach to funding and knowledge sharing that focus on adaptation, loss and damage.



## Addressing Deep Energy Poverty in Africa

Africa's renewable energy potential is vast yet untapped. According to the African Development Bank (AfDB), the continent has almost unlimited solar capacity at 11 terawatts (11 TW), abundant hydro at 350 giga-watts (GW), wind at 110 GW, and geothermal energy at 15 GW. Despite this potential, Africa only accounts for 2% of global investments in clean energy. There is need to address this deep energy poverty reality. Despite an abundance of renewable and non-renewable energy resources, 600 million people who represent 43% of the continent's population lack access to electricity. Only a handful of countries like Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda are on track to full energy access by 2030. These countries offer models for success. Despite these encouragements, achieving just energy transition is essential for balancing Africa's development and





climate resilience priorities, especially as the continent navigates the complex deliberations preceding COP 29.

Likewise, the continent has witnessed a sharp discovery of hydrocarbons such as the estimated 6.5 billion barrels of oil in Uganda, 4 billion barrels in Kenya and major natural gas reserves in Namibia, Mozambique and Tanzania. Africa's hydrocarbon discoveries present both opportunities and dilemmas for energy security, especially with the world prioritizing shifts towards de-carbonization.

Importantly, conversations around just energy transition have raised concerns about double standards. Just like Dubai that hosted COP 28, Azerbaijan, which will host COP 29 has oil and natural gas accounting for over 90% of its total export revenues. These countries are therefore reluctant to make concession from their hydrocarbon trading. Equally, in 2024, developed petro-states like United States, United Kingdom, Norway and Australia have granted oil and gas licenses that could potentially release 12 billion tons of GHG emission, if fully exploited.

However, these developed countries discourage Africa from exploiting its hydrocarbon, while they employ environmentally harmful extraction methods like shaling to bolster their own energy security. Geopolitical occurrences have further exposed this duality. For example, in response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the US and European nations ramped up oil and gas production or negotiated long-term contracts with oil producing states in the Middle East to safeguard their energy. Similarly, large GHG emitters in China and India ramped up oil purchases from Russia, which they eventually sold to EU despite embargo on Russia oil export. This current and historic hypocrisy is reminiscent of the industrial revolution when the Global North fully exploited hydrocarbons to fuel

its development. Conversely, they now advance conversations and actions that deny Africa the same route to industrialization.



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## The right to sustainable energy development

The AGN must push for a just energy transition framework that acknowledges and prioritizes the continent's right to develop its energy sectors in a way that serves its population and interests. Africa should not be held to unrealistic expectations without corresponding actions to develop renewable energy infrastructure. The AGN can explore trade-offs with developed nations by demanding increased and fairly priced financing for renewables and infrastructure, given the continent's low historic emissions and growing energy needs. Such financing can also help transition the continent from hydrocarbons to clean energy in a way that does not compromise the socio-economic and development goals.

## Strengthened Africa's Food Systems and Value Chains

Climate change has severely impacted Africa's agricultural production, distribution and value chains. It increasingly threatens the continent's food security and economic growth. The continent's food systems are already fragile due to inadequate infrastructure and low technological adoption. As Africa's predominant economic sector, it faces compounded risks associated with erratic weather patterns, prolonged drought and floods. In sub-Saharan Africa,





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agricultural losses due to climate change are estimated to reach \$68 billion by 2100. This estimation highlights the urgent need by AGN to prioritize lobby for strengthened food and agricultural value chain systems at COP 29.

The vulnerabilities of African food systems were not sufficiently addressed in previous COPs despite the continent's heavy reliance on agriculture for livelihoods. For instance, policy prioritization of adaptive agricultural systems was scarce.

### Climate Smart Agriculture

While COP 28 acknowledges the importance of resilient food production systems, gaps remain in securing adequate commitment and investment for climate-resilient agricultural practices. The AGN must leverage opportunities at COP 29 to push for greater financial and technological support for climate-smart agriculture and resilient value chains. This is imperative for mitigating the impacts of climate change and ensuring sustainable food security.

African agriculture faces significant climate-related disruptions. In East Africa, recurrent droughts have reduced crop yields and livestock production. These have exacerbated hunger and food insecurity status. In West Africa, unpredictable rainfall patterns have led to crop failures and food shortages. Beyond production, climate change disrupts distribution networks including access to markets, and escalating transportation costs.

Eventually, the combination of these factors catalyze post-harvest losses. Equally, poor infrastructure and inadequate storage facilities further undermine value addition and reduced incomes of farming communities.

The AGN should focus on mainstreaming investments for afro-centric technological transfer and climate-smart innovations that addresses these challenges. These policy options can be integrated for funding under a revamped climate finance infrastructure, with potential incorporation in the Loss and Damage Funds and Adaptation Fund. Climate-resilient technologies such as research on drought-tolerant seed varieties, efficient water irrigation systems, and sustainable land management practices should be prioritized for resources.

Likewise, lessons from previous COPs show that AGN can leverage the "polluter pays" principle to advocate for increased climate financing targeted at food systems. Developed nations must be held accountable for their historic emission and contribute meaningfully to Africa's adaptation efforts.



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### Conclusion

As Kenya leads AGN at COP 29, it is imperative to push for the restructuring of IFIs to ensure that climate and development finance is not only more accessible but also tailored for equity. This includes negotiating for facilities at similar terms and costs for which developed countries access development and climate finance. Kenya should push for equitable



climate financing, hold developed nations accountable for the \$1.3 trillion climate finance target. Establishing the African Center for Excellence on Climate Change in East Africa is crucial to building regional capacity and enhancing the continent's ability to track climate change commitments, mainstreaming indigenous and contemporary climate research and advocacy, and institutionalizing the continent's knowledge and efforts across various COP meetings. This Center would also foster regional and transcontinental partnerships, provide technical assistance and serve a knowledge hub for Africa.

The prioritization of an afro-centric NCQG and addressing implementation gaps from previous COPs should be at the forefront of discourses by AGN's. This will ensure the continent secures the resources necessary for sustainable development and resilience-building against climate impacts. There is an opportunity for Africa to revamp its food system to withstand and flourish against climate shocks. Ensuring Africa's food security by championing climate-smart agriculture and resilient food systems is imperative. By advocating for targeted investment, technological transfer and exchanges, and inclusive food systems, the AGN can

secure tangible victories that safeguard Africa's food security. On energy transition, the AGN should advocate for a framework that balances Africa's needs and development aspirations while tapping into both renewable and hydrocarbon energy sources. Conversations on just energy transition must guarantee equality in expectation and action for both the Global North and South, and guarantee energy access for all. Importantly, conversations should balance Africa's right of reciprocity in exploiting both the renewable and non-renewable energy sources in advancing development and global climate goals. Lastly, through a unified African voice, Kenya can lead the continent to secure meaningful commitments, drive climate actions and pioneer an afro-inclusive foundation for a more equitable global climate framework.

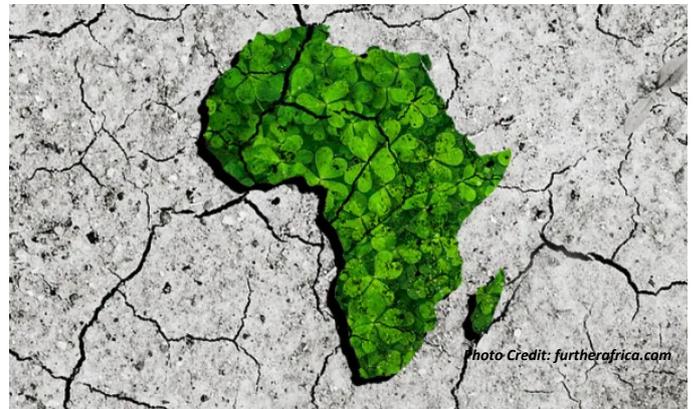


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