



A REFLECTION ON THE UNFCCC PROCESS AND WHAT IT TAKES TO SECURE ACCOUNTABILITY IN COP28

**BY DR. MITHIKA MWENDA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PACJA**





Message



Its apparently clear that the climate negotiations have taken both a wrong direction and trajectory. This assertion is informed by lack of political will by developed countries, blatant subjective misinterpretation of the Paris Agreement provisions on common and differentiated responsibilities and outright attempts to secure interests of western based capitalists with an acute disregard of context for countries in Africa.



This is compounded by a high-level of hypocrisy – pushing Africa to decarbonize while on the flipside re-opening old coal mines and initiating new exploration deals in the developing world, a majority in Africa.

Signature

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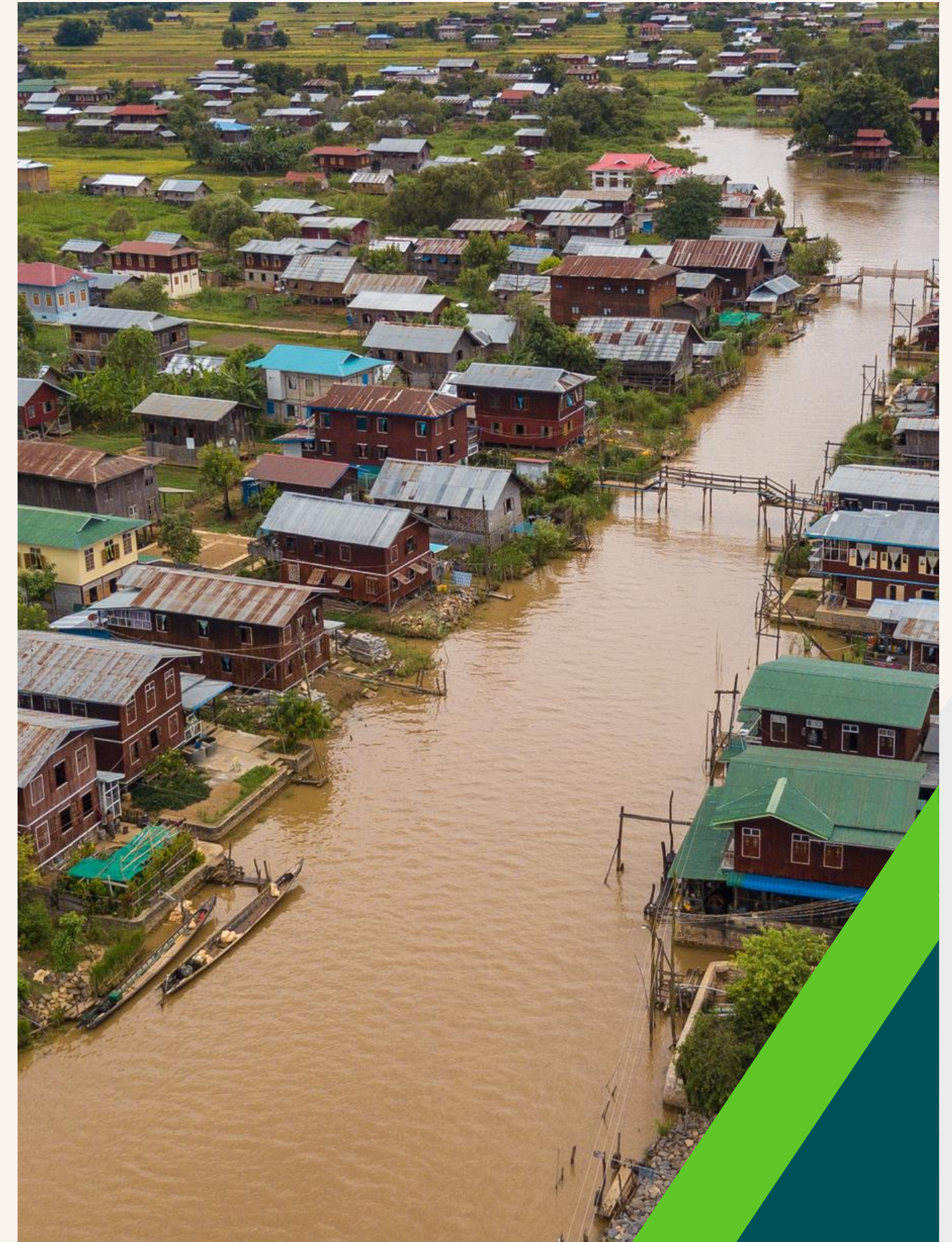
About PACJA

Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) is a continental coalition of Civil Society Organizations from diverse backgrounds in Africa. Founded in 2008, the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance has emerged as the most vibrant and largest Civil Society platform in climate change and sustainable development, with a membership of more than 1000 organizations and networks in 51 African Countries.

- Science is not in question! The recent 6th Assessment Report confirms that Africa, as the lowest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change, is already experiencing widespread losses and damages attributable to climate change. As Africa loses its development track at under weight of climate change, global leaders have conspired to withhold the much-desired public funding, dangling private funding in form of loans to debt-debt-ridden African countries.
- This hypocrisy is compounded by their further 'raids' to resources already secured by the GCF for their multinational banks in the pretense of 'leveraging private sector investments. The rise of far-right and inward-looking governments in the North has worsened the situation and delayed progress in collectively tackling the climate crisis and taking responsibility.



- This has been witnessed by the reopening of old coal mines and tapping more into fossil fuel reserves to cushion citizens against the sharp impacts of the winter seasons in Europe. The shaping of policies and recovery strategies linked to the COVID- pandemic makes it hard to assuage the situation with rising insecurity and the climate crisis still ravaging the world. This dampens the spirit of responsibility and accountability by the inward-looking governments and stifles transformative approaches that are necessary for African States.





- It was an utter shame to see nearly all streams of climate talks stall, at the heart of proposals for funding, and governments of developed countries attempting to shift blame to their private sector actors for failing to meet the 100 billion dollar funding pledge. As such pledges for funding remain scanty, slow in their announcement and way less ambitious!
- The Covid-19 pandemic painted the picture clearly, on response measures by developing nations and how African countries were disenfranchised, we expect better towards a green and just recovery in line with frontline communities still battling to get back on their feet in the nexus of rising food prices made worse by the impacts of the climate crisis amidst rising cost of living and debt crisis in Africa

A GREEN AND JUST RECOVERY...

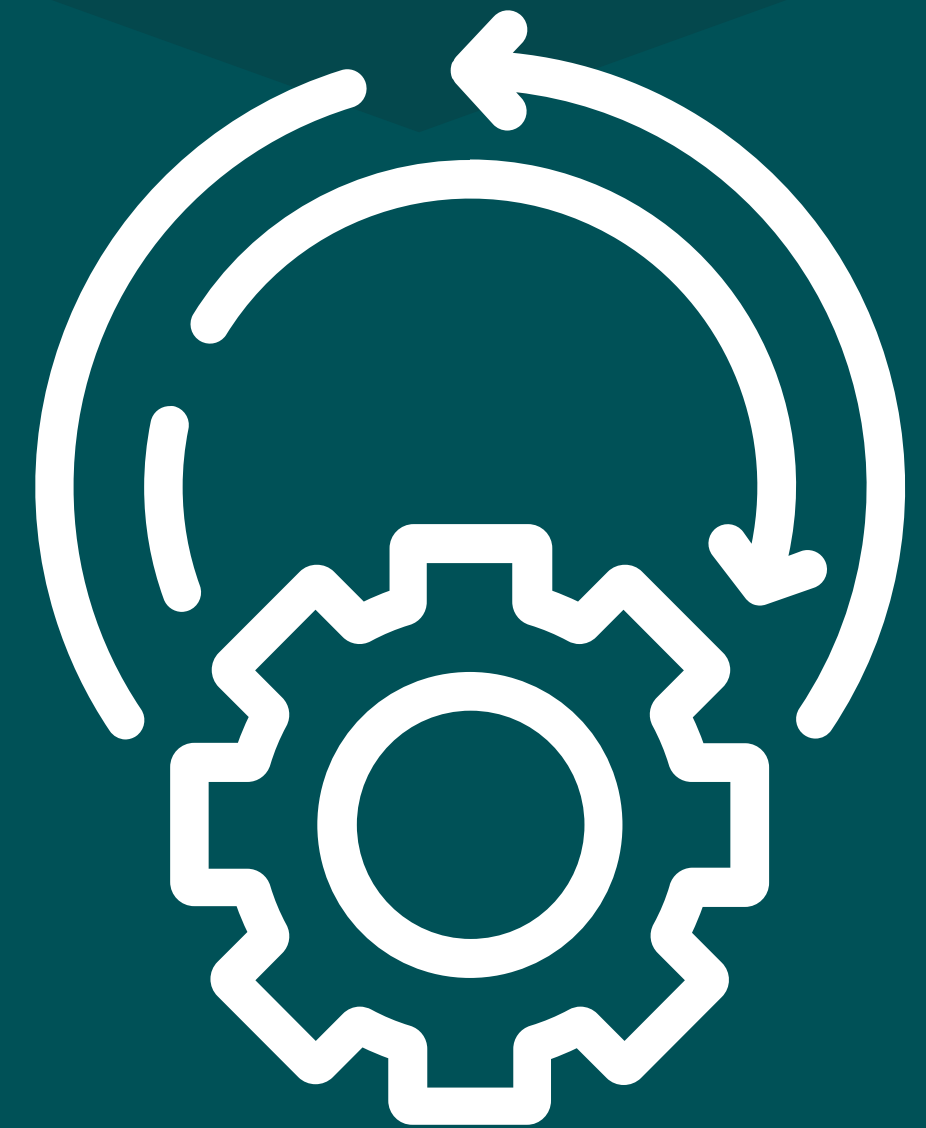
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- A green and just recovery pathway from the COVID-19 Pandemic calls on all citizens to re-imagine our world in response to the compounding environmental, economic, social, and health challenges as well as their inequitable impacts.
- This remains central to bringing particular African economies out of recession through a redesign to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, create jobs, increase the resilience of infrastructure and frontline communities, and prioritize the inclusion of vulnerable groups.
- In the wake of the rising cost of living, the rampage of the debt crisis in Africa, and pressure on fragile ecosystems, improving livelihoods and fighting climate change remains key consideration for African economies.

ON ADAPTATION

- With the rapid global warming, adaptation costs will grow exponentially challenging the scale of both public and private finance required to address the crisis on a yearly basis.
- Adaptation generally is cost-effective, but annual finance flows targeting adaptation for Africa are billions of US dollars less than the lowest adaptation cost estimates for near-term climate change that requires just transitions in energy, agriculture, labor and related elements that have a bearing on the most vulnerable in Africa.



THE GEO-POLITICS

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- Rising conflict such as Ukraine –Russia war has severely impacted food systems and energy demand across the rest of the world; further contributing to the escalation of economic pressure and rise of food prices as well as a humanitarian catastrophe from the related displacement of people not forgetting the loss of lives and livelihoods.
- The reality is that the supply shocks emanating from the blockade of Ukrainian exports, coupled with record price levels for energy and basic commodities have fueled market shocks and speculative operations, leading to unpredictability in global food supply impacting Africa the most

- The situation is no different in Africa with conflicts ranging from the Tigray –federal feud, and the forceful takeover in Burkina Faso which are just but examples of the climate crisis exacerbating security in fragile countries and the call for structured deliberate support to restore and uplift these regions and their most impacted people.
- These conflicts widen the supply gap creating a challenge to the global community with local-level impacts given that the world relies on oil and gas for energy supply amounting to nearly 50% in 2022. The conflict-ridden disruption of the energy supply has led to an unprecedented increase in the prices of oil, gas, and other fossil fuels putting more pressure on fragile ecosystems and diminishing natural resources further disrupting just energy transitions in Africa.



THE GLOBAL STOCK TAKE



Whereas climate funds have not targeted more vulnerable countries, in the period 2014 – 2018, there has been a casual approach to honoring commitments with only 46% of the climate finance commitments compared to 96% for other projects being disbursed. UNFCCC 6th Assessment Report

In this year of the Global Stock Take (GST), we are curiously cautious of the nature of success that will be claimed by developed countries and multilateral agencies on progress made in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. As PACJA we shall complement that with highly participatory community-led assessments of its performance. I fear what score will be assigned by a pastoralist who is yet to see a coin and all the livestock has been decimated by climate-induced drought.

DIRECTION OF NEGOTIATIONS

- In my considered opinion starting from the recent happenings, with the announcement of the leadership of the COP process through the COP Presidency of Sultan al-Jaber, it is quite clear that COP28 has started on a wrong footing.
- You cannot install a mogul of an Oil Empire to be in charge of a multilateral process without compromising the integrity and priorities of developing nations that are most impacted by the climate crisis. It is time the UNFCCC strongly pronounced and redeemed itself by providing more clarity on what is expected of global climate leadership at this tipping point of the climate catastrophe that needs true champions of the planet.



- It goes without saying that providing space for all voices to be genuinely heard and represented in an inclusive and diverse manner is a key consideration for enhancing accountability by leaving no one behind. There are prospects to open the space for participation but this remains constricted with voices of communities at the frontline of the climate crisis and their rights and those of environmental defenders continuously being muzzled and facing the fatal dark side of activism.
- The global community must demonstrate leadership for real! To do this; the focus must be on locally-led adaptation initiatives to engage vulnerable populations and the invisible and inaudible voices as solution providers to the climate crisis. Financing LLA initiatives is a key ingredient in building the resilience of frontline communities.
- PACJA will continue to play its dutiful role in strengthening communities at the frontline of the climate crisis to track climate finance.

- Developed countries must meet part of their bargain in accessing funding for the implementation of the NDCs as a pathway to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. This calls for financing that is adequate towards mitigation, but the real opportunities for Africa lie in climate financing meeting the ambitions of the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) across the continent. They must also show ambition by raising their emission reduction targets for true climate justice to be achieved by frontline communities in Africa bearing the burden of their historical emissions and injustices.
 - Already dubbed a COP of Accountability', COP28 has no choice but to do its bidding in scaling platforms for strengthened accountability through the implementation of the Sharma plan and pending elements of other COPs.
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- Movements of communities at the frontline of the climate crisis, supported by global citizens of goodwill shall drive the much-desired accountability. PACJA will be at the heart and center of this organizing.



CALL TO ACCOUNTABILITY

- PACJA will pursue all elements of mainstreaming, strategic engagements, and side processes aimed at ensuring mechanisms and modalities to operationalize the loss and damage facility are closed on at COP28. We call on world leaders to remain steadfast in achieving the Glasgow Pact of doubling funding for adaptation, rather than slicing existing funding to dupe Africans on progress towards funding the Loss and Damage Facility.
- The letter and the spirit of the Paris Agreement must not only be considered but upheld! The principality of the considerations for Africa as a special needs a circumstances region underpins any progressive and urgent global action in forestalling the climate crisis.

In conclusion...

- If there was ever a time that the leadership of developed countries was being called to action, it is without a doubt, NOW!
- Developed nations MUST raise their ambition to CUT emissions by phasing out fossil fuels, and embrace renewables. The massive investments in false solutions for greenwashing must end.
- One winter season does not justify reactivating dirty energy sources.
- Clearly, climate responses must remain progressive, coherent and consistent with strong elements of safeguarding for vulnerable populations and pro-equity, without back tracking.
- We expect and demand for nothing less!



Thank You!

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