



COP30 BRIEFING

PROGRESS, GAPS, AND THE PATH TO JUSTICE

African Non-State Actors' Analysis

Issued under the leadership of
the Pan-African Climate Justice
Alliance and its network of 2000
organizations in 54 countries

November 2025 | Nairobi, Kenya

HOW THIS ANALYSIS SHOULD BE USED

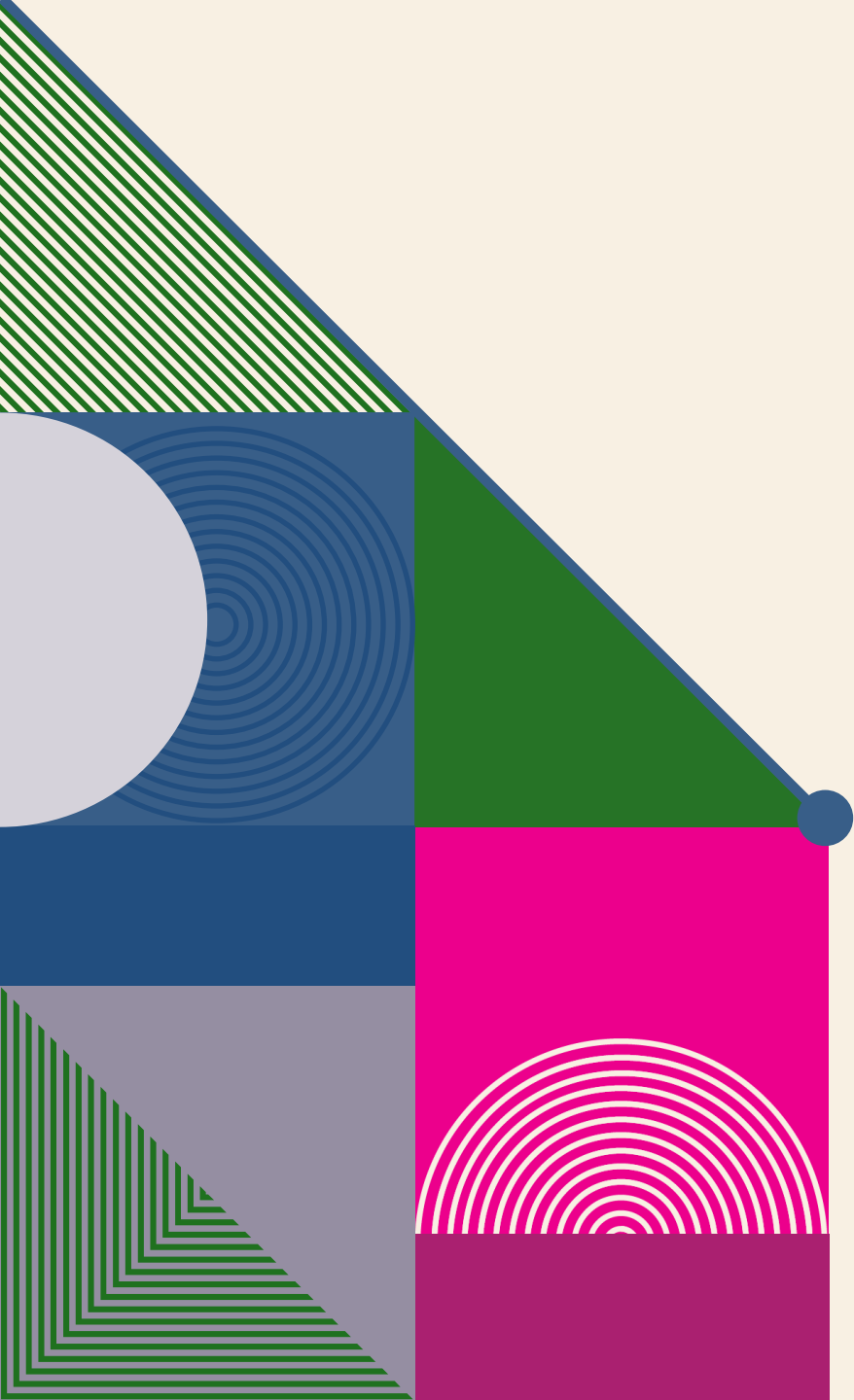
This briefing note distils the main outcomes of COP30 on issues that matter most to Africa: adaptation, finance, just transition, loss and damage, mitigation, and Africa's special needs and special circumstances. It compares what was decided in Belém with African Non-State Actors' (NSAs) pre-COP demands and sets out updated positions to guide advocacy in capitals, regional bodies, and future UNFCCC sessions.

It is intended for African negotiators, parliamentarians, government officials, civil society, social movements, media, development partners, and multilateral institutions that shape climate, debt, trade, and development policy. Its premise is that what happened in Belém must now be translated into concrete political choices and financial decisions that advance climate justice and Africa's right to development.

OUR OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF COP30

From an African perspective, COP30 delivered important openings but not the decisive shift required to protect lives, unlock development, and anchor justice in global climate governance. The headline political signals, such as the long-awaited opening of a process on Africa's Special Needs and Special Circumstances and the promise to triple adaptation finance by 2035, reflect a growing recognition of Africa's lived realities. Yet the absence of binding finance trajectories, continued ambiguity on fossil fuel phase-out, and the chronic undercapitalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund expose a negotiation process that still struggles to translate ambition into meaningful equity.

In essence, **COP30 offered doors, not deliverables.** These doors (SNCs, the Belém-Addis vision on adaptation, the NCQG work programme, and a new Just Transition Mechanism) create political space. But they do not guarantee implementation. Whether this becomes a turning point or simply another holding pattern depends on how African actors organise, influence and assert their collective interests in the months ahead. African NSAs therefore see COP30 as a moment that must be claimed (not celebrated), a starting point for deeper reforms rather than the final word on climate justice.



EXPECTATIONS, HITS AND MISSES

The next pages summarises the core outcomes of COP30 on issues most relevant to Africa and contrasts them with our pre-COP positions. It also outlines our updated post-COP30 demands, reflecting both the openings created in Belém and the gaps that must now be addressed through sustained advocacy.

AFRICA'S SPECIAL NEEDS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

KEY DECISION

COP30 formally opened a two-year process on recognising Africa's Special Needs and Circumstances (SNC), including a mandated conference under COP31 in 2026 and a report to COP32 in 2027.

OUR POSITION PRE-COP

NSAs and the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) demanded formal recognition and operationalization of Africa's SNCs under the Paris Agreement, with SNCs guiding decisions on finance, just transition, response measures, and implementation.

POST-COP ANALYSIS & REVISED POSITION

This is a quiet but strategic breakthrough after years of blockage, including at COP27. The risk is dilution if SNCs are folded into a generic "all developing countries" framing.

We will: (i) treat the SNC work programme as the political umbrella for finance, transition, and response-measures debates; (ii) push for SNC language that explicitly links Africa's climate vulnerability to its structural economic constraints (debt, low fiscal space, unfair trade); and (iii) insist that SNCs be reflected in all future decisions on financing, transparency, and response measures, not just in narrative preambles.

ADAPTATION & GLOBAL GOAL ON ADAPTATION (GGA)

KEY DECISION

COP30 adopted 59 Belém Adaptation Indicators and launched the “Belém-Addis vision on adaptation”, a two-year policy alignment process to develop guidance for operationalising those indicators. The “Belém Package” also confirms a commitment to triple adaptation finance by 2035, but leaves timing and delivery modalities largely to future finance processes.

OUR POSITION PRE-COP

African NSAs called for: (i) GGA indicators that are locally relevant, rights-based and trackable; (ii) tripling adaptation finance by 2030, delivered predominantly as grants; and (iii) explicit recognition of adaptation as a legal obligation, not charity, backed by clear means of implementation.

POST-COP ANALYSIS & REVISED POSITION

The partial adoption of indicators and launch of the Belém-Addis vision are important but incomplete wins. The text also states that indicators “shall not be used as a condition for access to funding”, which protects African countries but leaves the finance gap wide open.

We will now: (i) use the Belém-Addis process to embed locally led, gender-responsive, and ecosystem-based adaptation as the benchmark for success; (ii) demand that the promised tripling of adaptation finance is front-loaded before 2035 and reported transparently, with a minimum grant share; and (iii) push African governments to adopt national adaptation laws and budget rules that lock in adaptation as a public investment obligation.

CLIMATE FINANCE & NCQG / BAKU-BELÉM ROADMAP

KEY DECISION

COP30 confirmed a collective aim to mobilise at least USD 1.3 trillion per year by 2035 for developing countries, across all sources, building on the Baku-to-Belém Roadmap, and to remain on a pathway towards USD 300 billion per year in public climate finance for developing countries by 2035, with developed countries “taking the lead”.

A high-level ministerial roundtable on NCQG implementation and a two-year work programme on climate finance were also agreed.

OUR POSITION PRE-COP

NSAs demanded: (i) USD 300 billion per year by 2030 as a minimum public finance floor; (ii) a clear, earlier pathway to USD 1.3 trillion per year, with quantified grant targets and burden-sharing; (iii) debt-free and grant-based finance, with loans not counted as developed-country contributions; and (iv) deep reform of MDBs and the global financial architecture.

POST-COP ANALYSIS & REVISED POSITION

The 1.3-trillion reference is a headline advance but not yet a deliverable: no binding trajectory, no grant quota, and no burden-sharing formula. Africa still faces a debt-heavy finance landscape.

NSAs will: (i) treat the new work programme and ministerial roundtable as pressure points to demand public, grant-heavy finance in line with Article 9.1; (ii) campaign for exclusion of non-concessional loans from climate finance accounting; (iii) link NCQG debates to debt cancellation, tax justice and financial-architecture reform, using Africa’s SNCs as leverage; and (iv) build coalitions with LDCs, SIDS and other vulnerable groups to insist that the 1.3-trillion figure becomes a binding floor, not a distant aspiration.

FUND FOR RESPONDING TO LOSS AND DAMAGE

KEY DECISION

COP30 adopted the initial “Barbados Implementation Modalities” for the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, including grant-based interventions for 2025-2026 and allowing direct budget-support access through national governments, with further work on small-grants and rapid-disbursement windows. However, total pledges remain below USD 1 billion, far short of needs.

OUR POSITION PRE-COP

NSAs called for: (i) speedy, fully grant-based capitalization of the Fund; (ii) a dedicated sub-goal for L&D under the NCQG; (iii) direct access for communities and CSOs, not only governments; and (iv) ring-fenced revenues from polluter-pays and carbon taxes.

POST-COP ANALYSIS & REVISED POSITION

The Barbados modalities prove the Fund is operational on paper but not yet transformative in practice. Under-capitalization and weak access for frontline actors remain the main risks. NSAs will: (i) demand rapid expansion of community-level windows, including CSO and local-authority access; (ii) campaign for new, automatic revenue streams (solidarity levies on shipping, aviation and fossil profits) earmarked for L&D; (iii) resist any attempt to finance L&D through loans or insurance schemes that shift risk back to the poor; and (iv) insist that L&D is hard-wired into the NCQG and future SNC discussions as a stand-alone, grant-only pillar.

MITIGATION, FOSSIL FUELS & ENERGY ACCESS

KEY DECISION

COP30 adopted the “Belém Mission to 1.5”, described as “aimed at enabling ambition and implementation of nationally determined contributions and national adaptation plans... across mitigation and adaptation”. It also launched a Global Implementation Accelerator to support NDC and NAP implementation.

Crucially, the final “global mutirão” decision does not refer to ‘fossil fuels’ or a phase-out roadmap and is largely silent on deforestation.

OUR POSITION PRE-COP

NSAs demanded: (i) strong language on an equitable (sequenced or differentiated), time-bound phase-out of fossil fuels, led by developed countries; (ii) protection of Africa’s right to industrialize and expand energy access; and (iii) non-debt, pro-poor mitigation finance aligned with just transition and energy-access goals.

POST-COP ANALYSIS & REVISED POSITION

On mitigation, COP30 is a serious missed opportunity. The world moves closer to 2.5–2.8°C while the text avoids the words “fossil fuels”. For Africa, the battle now shifts to NDC 3.0 and national energy strategies. NSAs will: (i) press developed countries to hard-code phase-out schedules in their next NDCs and report against them; (ii) campaign for universal recognition of energy access as a climate goal, with Africa’s renewable and clean-cooking ambitions treated as global mitigation contributions; (iii) oppose unilateral carbon border measures that penalise African exports; and (iv) insist that any cooperation under Article 6 includes fair prices, sovereign control, and community benefit-sharing, not new carbon colonialism.

JUST TRANSITION & CRITICAL MINERALS

KEY DECISION

COP30 agreed a UNFCCC Just Transition Mechanism, to enhance international cooperation, capacity-building and knowledge-sharing, and adopted detailed principles stressing equity, human rights, labour rights, social protection, Indigenous rights, gender equality, youth participation, and the role of education and skills.

OUR POSITION PRE-COP

NSAs called for: (i) recognition of Africa's development and industrialisation rights as core to just transition; (ii) an African Critical Minerals Governance Framework to secure value addition at home; (iii) rejection of unilateral measures such as CBAM; and (iv) formal social dialogue with workers, communities, women, youth and Indigenous Peoples in all transition plans.

POST-COP ANALYSIS & REVISED POSITION

The Just Transition Mechanism's principles are a powerful normative toolbox for African actors. But without finance, safeguards and strong labour provisions at country level, they risk remaining aspirational.

We will: (i) use the COP30 principles as benchmarks for national just transition policies, mining codes and industrial strategies; (ii) push the AU and RECs to design a continental framework for critical minerals governance anchored in value addition and FPIC; (iii) demand a dedicated Just Transition finance window under NCQG to support workers, informal economies and social protection; and (iv) call out companies and MDBs that finance projects breaching these principles.

INFORMATION INTEGRITY, SCIENCE & MULTILATERALISM

KEY DECISION

COP30 “recognizes the centrality of equity and the best available science for effective climate action and policymaking, as provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change” and includes a commitment to promote information integrity and counter climate disinformation in UNFCCC processes. It also reaffirms multilateralism and the Paris Agreement’s principles and provisions.

OUR POSITION PRE-COP

NSAs stressed the need to defend science, protect civic space and safeguard human-rights defenders, especially in a context of climate denial, shrinking civic spaces globally (including in “advanced democracies”) and rising repression.

POST-COP ANALYSIS & REVISED POSITION

The COP30 language is both symbolic and important at a time when some major powers are back-tracking on the SDGs and multilateral commitments. But attacks on environmental defenders and constraints on civic space continue on the ground.

NSAs will: (i) use the information-integrity language to challenge state-sponsored disinformation and corporate greenwashing; (ii) demand formal protection measures for human-rights and environment defenders in host-country agreements and COP security protocols; and (iii) link science-based decision-making to Africa’s own knowledge systems, including Indigenous and local knowledge, in the Belem-Addis adaptation process.

GLOBAL ECONOMIC REFORM, TRADE & RESPONSE MEASURES

KEY DECISION

COP30 reaffirmed that measures to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade, and that Parties should cooperate to promote a “supportive and open international economic system” that enables sustainable growth in developing countries.

OUR POSITION PRE-COP

We inked climate justice to debt cancellation, fair trade rules, tax justice, and reform of MDBs, arguing that Africa cannot finance adaptation, just transition and mitigation within a rigged financial system. They also opposed unilateral trade measures that penalise African exports.

POST-COP ANALYSIS & REVISED POSITION

The language on trade and response measures gives Africa a legal hook but not yet a remedy. NSAs will: (i) use these provisions to contest unilateral carbon border measures and deforestation regulations that undermine Africa’s fiscal space; (ii) press African negotiators to hard-wire economic-justice language into SNC, NCQG and response-measures negotiations at SB sessions; and (iii) deepen alliances between climate, debt and tax-justice movements to push for a UN-led financial-architecture reform process, including debt workouts and global tax rules that expand fiscal space for climate action.

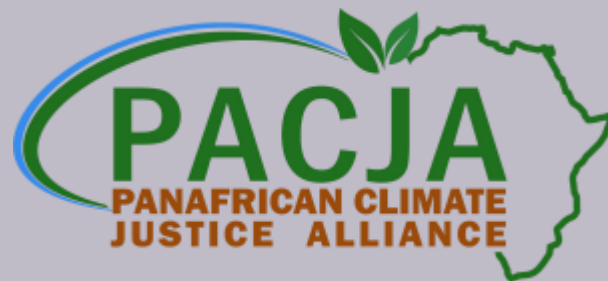
CONCLUSION: FROM BELÉM TO ADDIS ABABA AND BEYOND

COP30 was not the breakthrough Africa needed. It did, however, create new entry points that African Non-State Actors can turn into leverage.

- The SNC work programme offers a chance to anchor Africa's structural vulnerabilities and development rights at the centre of all future climate decisions.
- The Belém-Addis vision creates space to push for locally led adaptation backed by real finance, not symbolic commitments.
- The emerging frameworks around the NCQG, the 1.3-trillion roadmap, and the Just Transition Mechanism can still be shaped into tools that prioritise grants, protect workers, and promote value-added industrialisation.

The next phase is about implementation and political strategy. This requires:

- 1. In capitals:** aligning national climate, industrial, debt and social-protection policies with Africa's SNCs and just-transition principles.
- 2. At the continental level:** using the AU, AfDB and regional bodies to design African-owned finance and mineral-governance frameworks that reduce dependency and expand fiscal space.
- 3. In UNFCCC negotiations:** coordinating African NSAs to enter every work programme (SNCs, Belém-Addis, NCQG, L&D, just transition) with unified, time-bound demands.



Continental Secretariat | House No.J13 /
Kabarnet road, off Ngong Road, Nairobi,
Kenya | +254 20 8075808 |
info@pacja.org | www.pacja.org