



Triggering Momentum on Supporting Loss and Damage in an Era of Weakening Commitment to Climate Justice

A Communiqué from the 5th African Regional Conference on Loss and Damage | March 27, 2026, Lilongwe, Malawi

I. PREAMBLE

The 5th African Regional Conference on Loss and Damage aimed to provide a platform for African stakeholders to develop strategies for advancing sustainable, equitable and just financing and technical support on loss and damage in Africa. It was convened in Lilongwe, Malawi, from March 25 to 27, 2026, and comprised participants from African governments, frontline communities, non-state actors¹, UN agencies and development partners. Following comprehensive in-person and virtual consultations, participants issued the following statement:

Aware that Africa must act decisively in response to several interlinked and rapidly evolving dynamics shaping the loss and damage discourse, particularly as recent climate negotiations have been weakened by geopolitical tensions and reduced leadership from major emitters, undermining ambition and accountability.

Perplexed by the lack of political will among developed countries to implement their agreed obligations to limit global warming to below 1.5°C as highlighted in the Paris agreement, noting that this failure disproportionately burdens African countries, which bear the most severe consequences despite contributing least to the historical emissions driving the climate crisis.

Reflecting on the historical responsibilities and systemic financial inequities in global climate finance, where Africa faces structural barriers to accessing funds, with a disproportionate reliance on loans rather than grants. This imbalance further exacerbates existing debt burdens and ultimately limiting the capacity of African nations to respond effectively to climate crises.

Concerned about the critical financing gap and lack of political will, with current global commitments to Loss and Damage remaining grossly inadequate relative to the scale of need, and the slow mobilisation of resources reflecting a fundamental deficit in political will rather than resource availability.

Deeply concerned that less than one billion United States dollars has been mobilised for loss and damage in four years against an estimated annual need of USD 400–800 billion, and that only ten percent of climate finance reaches frontline communities, with children and youth receiving only 2.4% of climate financing.

¹ Women movements; Youth movements; Agriculture and food security; Labor movements & Trade Unions; Private sector; Indigenous people/ Local communities; Faith actors; Child and future generations; Health actors; Research & academia; National and International NGOs; Human rights and inclusivity organizations; Conservation & nature-based solutions organizations and Philanthropies

Disturbed by the centrality of debt-creating climate finance, including for adaptation and response to losses and damages, which continues to deepen the fiscal crises of African states.

Acknowledging the operationalisation of the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage (SNLD), and the Barbados Implementation Modality (BIM) for accessing funds in the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) as important milestones but noting that these remain too distant from frontline communities and the magnitude of resource needs.

Recognising that current frameworks inadequately capture losses and damages, including forgone opportunities for development such as investment in human capital, as well as the compounding effects of recurrent climate-induced disasters.

Fully aware that the existing global financial mechanisms and instruments, including FRLD, remain complex, slow and insufficiently responsive to the realities of vulnerable countries.

Concerned that there is no clear and agile roadmap on loss and damage post-Belém, and that this undermines the scaling of ambition on financing L&D, which has stagnated at COP28.

Apprised of the landmark the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion of July 2025 that affirms binding state obligations under customary international law and invokes the law of state responsibility as important advances in the legal and institutional landscape.

Affirming that reparations, as defined in the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation (2005), encompass restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-recurrence, and that the climate crisis is a structural injustice with identifiable responsible parties, who bear obligations of redress.

Acknowledging that loss and damage is not a humanitarian response but a matter of reparatory justice.

Inspired by the recent UN resolution recognising the transatlantic slave trade as the gravest crime against humanity, which reinforces that Africa's claim is not moral persuasion but a legal and political obligation.

Recognising that Africa is already doing more than its fair share, allocating scarce fiscal resources to climate action despite debt burdens, often at the expense of poverty alleviation and essential social programmes.

Leveraging on Addis Ababa Declaration that frames loss and damage finance not as discretionary aid but as a legal and moral commitment owed by wealthy nations and calls for a reformed global finance system that delivers grant-based, predictable funding to vulnerable countries.

Positioning to tap into the strategic window presented by Africa's hosting of COP32 to redefine global norms and centre loss and damage as a pillar of climate justice.

Keen to address weak coordination and capacity gaps, including limited research capacity at the national level, and to strengthen institutional arrangements and support decentralised implementation as an entry point to influence policy reform.

Conscious of progressive commitments and pronouncements to scale up development financing and further the global reform agenda as espoused in the Sevilla Pact, COP30 and COP16 outcomes, and G7 and G20 summit resolutions.

II. CALL TO ACTION

a. Scaled up, diversified, simplified financing pathways and access for L&D finance:

1. Developed countries must finance the FRLD based on historical responsibility. Current capitalisation remains far below the annual financing needs.
2. FRLD should prioritise grants to prevent worsening national debt burdens. Finance must stay accessible, transparent, participatory, and community-centred.
3. FRLD must create and institutionalise proximate direct access mechanisms for communities to enable resources to reach affected populations at the last mile through simplified, decentralised and community-led delivery mechanisms.
4. FRLD must enable inclusive financing and decision-making processes that reflect the needs and priorities of children, youth and vulnerable groups.

b. Reforms in loss and damage governance mechanisms:

1. The FRLD Board should fast-track direct access modalities for communities.
2. World leaders must accelerate meaningful, recipient-led global financing reforms that must ensure timely, accessible, fit-for-purpose L&D responses.

c. Technical capacity for assessing economic and non-economic L&D:

1. SNLD must deliver timely and demand-driven African technical assistance.
2. SNLD must have sustainable, predictable and sufficient financial, technical and human resources to enhance the capacity of developing countries to respond to loss and damage caused by the changing climate.
3. SNLD must prioritise local Organisations, Bodies, Networks and Experts (OBNEs) in delivering technical assistance to African countries.

g. Accelerating implementation of Addis Ababa Declaration in furthering L&D agenda:

1. Secure pan-African coordination and a concrete roadmap to COP32.
2. The African Union must establish a continental L&D coordination mechanism, including a Pan-African Loss and Damage Data Initiative to standardise methodologies and enable evidence generation.

h. Sustaining the reparations agenda:

1. Call on negotiators to act in good faith to ensure that finance under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement is treated as a binding obligation rooted in historical responsibility, not as a voluntary or diversified financing landscape.
2. Call on African negotiators to advance an agenda item within the framework of COP31 and COP32 that will lead to explicit recognition of loss and damage finance as part of a broader reparatory justice framework.

Commit to immediate action:

1. Launch a multi-stakeholder platform for sustained continental and global advocacy, keeping climate justice central to the agenda.
2. Establish a formal network at both continental and country levels to drive grassroots action across all African nations.
3. Record loss and damage cases across Africa, including non-economic losses, to build an evidence base for advocacy, accountability, and litigation.
4. Maintain intentional platforms that keep loss and damage high on Africa's priority list within a climate justice framework.



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