
PRESS STATEMENT

African Civil Society Calls for a Decisive Shift from Climate Promises to Implementation of Climate Justice Actions at UNFCCC SB64

Issued by the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) on behalf of African Civil Society Organizations participating in UNFCCC SB64.

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As the Sixty-Fourth Sessions of the Subsidiary Bodies (SB64) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) commence in Bonn, African civil society organisations, coordinated through the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), reiterate an urgent and unequivocal message: Africa can no longer afford another cycle of climate negotiations characterised by delay, dilution and deferral.

For millions of Africans, climate change is not a future risk; it is a present, lived and intensifying reality. Across the continent, prolonged droughts, devastating floods, cyclones, heatwaves and ecosystem degradation continue to destroy livelihoods, deepen food insecurity, displace communities and undermine hard-won development gains. Yet Africa remains responsible for less than four per cent of cumulative global greenhouse gas emissions while bearing some of the most severe consequences of a crisis it did not create.

The climate crisis in Africa is fundamentally a justice issue.

The outcomes of recent COPs demonstrate both progress and persistent shortcomings. At COP28 in Dubai, Parties adopted the historic Global Stocktake, recognising the need to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems and operationalising the Loss and Damage Fund. This represented a significant political breakthrough after years of resistance. However, commitments on implementation and finance remained inadequate. At COP29 in Baku, Parties adopted a New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance and initiated the Baku-to-Belém Roadmap intended to mobilise US\$1.3 trillion annually for developing countries by 2035. While this was an attempt to acknowledge the scale of the challenge, many developing countries and civil society organisations rightly expressed concern that the agreed public finance commitments remained substantially below documented needs. At COP30 in Belém, progress was recorded on adaptation indicators, but the much-needed means for implementation - adaptation finance remained a mirage.

Progress in the Just Transition Mechanism attracted mixed signals – pro-rights and justice framing but on the flipside protectionist in character with portent ability to delay transition from fossil fuels by developed countries. Parties failed to agree on a roadmap for transitioning away from fossil fuels despite overwhelming scientific evidence and broad support from vulnerable countries – an omission exposed the enduring influence of vested interests and the widening gap between climate science and political decision-making.

SB64 therefore arrives at a defining moment for multilateral climate governance. It must not become another procedural checkpoint on the road to COP31 in Türkiye. It must become the platform through which Parties restore trust, demonstrate ambition and lay the groundwork for urgent decisions and implementation frameworks that respond to the realities confronting vulnerable populations, especially in Africa. As SB64 commences this week, we are alarmed by the conspicuous omission of loss and damage as well as National Adaptation Plans agenda items from the lists of agenda presented by SBI and SUBSTA chairs for adoption. We align with the statement issued by the Africa group of negotiators at the opening plenary yesterday, where the same concern was raised and reiterate that negotiations devoid of loss& damage and NAPs are tantamount to abdication of justice for the victims of climate change, especially in Africa.

African civil society enters SB64 with three overarching priorities.

First, climate finance must move from rhetoric to delivery. The promise of climate action without adequate means of implementation is meaningless. Developing countries continue to face an enormous financing gap that constrains adaptation, mitigation, loss and damage responses and just transition efforts. African countries are being asked to increase ambition while simultaneously navigating debt distress, shrinking fiscal space and escalating climate impacts. This contradiction is neither fair nor sustainable. SB64 must therefore advance clear pathways for implementing Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement, which obliges developed countries to provide financial resources to developing countries. Climate finance must be public, grant-based, predictable, accessible and additional to existing development assistance. Adaptation finance, in particular, must be scaled significantly and directed towards local communities, women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and frontline populations who are already bearing the costs of climate impacts. The commitment to further the NCQG emerging from Belém must now be translated into concrete delivery frameworks, timelines and clear tracking and accountability mechanisms.

Second, Africa requires a just transition that is genuinely just. We reject narratives that frame decarbonisation solely through the lens of emissions reductions while ignoring questions of equity, development and energy access. More than 600 million Africans still lack access to electricity. A just transition must therefore support industrialisation, job creation, skills development, energy access and economic transformation. Decisions that enable African countries to build renewable energy systems, develop green industries and create dignified livelihoods without replicating historical patterns of extraction and dependency are the minimum of what we expect from Bonn.

We call for a dedicated financing window for nationally determined just transition pathways and for stronger commitments on technology development and transfer. A just transition cannot become another unfunded aspiration. It must be backed by finance, technology and capacity-building support commensurate with the scale of transformation required. Third, adaptation and resilience must be elevated to the centre of global climate action. For Africa, adaptation is not optional; it is a matter of survival.

The Global Goal on Adaptation can only succeed if accompanied by robust means of implementation and indicators that reflect local realities, traditional knowledge systems and community resilience. Adaptation outcomes must be measured not only through technical metrics but through improvements in food security, water availability, public health, ecosystem integrity and human wellbeing.

As negotiations progress, we remain deeply concerned by recurring patterns that continue to undermine ambition. Developed countries have repeatedly expressed hesitation regarding legally grounded obligations on climate finance, resisted stronger language on historical responsibility and sought to broaden the contributor base in ways that risk diluting their commitments under the Convention and the Paris Agreement. We have also witnessed attempts to shift emphasis towards private finance while avoiding meaningful discussions on public finance obligations, debt burdens and the structural inequalities embedded within the global financial architecture.

We are aware of the implications of the geopolitical context and its role in complicating the negotiations. We nevertheless assert that climate justice cannot become collateral damage in geopolitical rivalries. The atmosphere does not negotiate or recognise political convenience. Delayed action today will impose far greater economic and social costs tomorrow, which all negotiators must be committed to avoiding at all costs.

We therefore call upon climate envoys, ministers and negotiators from developed countries to demonstrate leadership commensurate with their historical responsibility and current capabilities. We urge them to move beyond procedural obstruction and embrace outcomes that reflect equity, science and solidarity. Specifically, we call on developed countries to commit to substantial increases in grant-based climate finance; establish a credible roadmap towards mobilising and delivering the US\$1.3 trillion annual climate finance goal; support adaptation finance targets aligned with assessed needs; operationalise financing arrangements for just transitions in developing countries; strengthen technology transfer and capacity-building mechanisms; and ensure that future negotiations remain anchored in the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

The success of SB64 should ultimately be judged not by the number of agenda items concluded but by whether it restores confidence in the multilateral process and delivers for those most affected by climate change.

For Africa, favourable outcomes from SB64 would include measurable progress on climate finance arrangements, clear pathways for implementing adaptation commitments, strengthened support for just transitions, enhanced accountability mechanisms and a negotiating framework that positions COP31 in Türkiye to adopt decisions that close implementation gaps rather than widen them. Africa is not asking for charity. Africa is demanding justice. A corresponding level of ambition from those with the greatest responsibility and capacity to act remains widely missing. As we gather here, we remind Parties that every delay in negotiations translates into lost livelihoods, lost opportunities and, increasingly, lost lives. The world has negotiated long enough. The time has come to implement commitments, honour obligations and place justice at the centre of climate action. The future credibility of the UNFCCC process depends on it.

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Signed: Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance