

Concept Note

for the

13th Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-XIII)

Theme: Empowering Africa's Climate Action with Science, Finance, and Just Transition

Date: 5–7 September 2025
Location: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

1. Introduction

The 13th Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA-XIII) will be a strategic technical convening providing a critical technical foundation for the Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2). It will be held between 5–7 September 2025 in Addis Ababa. It will gather a wide range of stakeholders—governments, academia and research communities, civil society, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and private sector actors—to influence African-led and evidence-based climate action towards enhanced resilience, green growth, and climate finance at scale and supporting the implementation of the and aligned with the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022 -2032).

CCDA-XIII, with its theme of "*Empowering Africa's Climate Action with Science, Finance, and Just transition*," is aligned well with ACS2's theme of "*Accelerating Global Climate Solutions: Financing for Africa's Resilient and Green Development*." CCDA-XIII will adopt ACS2's three-day thematic format, discussing nature- and technology-driven solutions, adaptation and resilience scaling, and transforming climate finance from aid to investment. During the process, CCDA-XIII will be providing a critical technical foundation to guide the united Africa's voice to ACS2 and Conference of the Parties (COP30) in Belém with the long-term objective of supporting policy coherence, evidence-based advice, as well as continent-wide priorities. Hence, it will concretize the continent's shared vision for climate justice, green economy, and financial change by connecting science, policy, and investment; prioritizing voices and bottom-up governance; and scaling African solutions as global blueprints for prosperity and resilience.

CCDA-XIII thematic areas have also considered the outcomes of the 62nd Subsidiary Bodies (SB62) sessions in Bonn, which called for the need to achieve climate implementation. These comprise: (i) Loss and Damage Fund design modalities and equitable access, (ii) building the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) framework, (iii) fresh focus on transitions that are just, with particular consideration under the UNFCCC Just Transition Work Programme, and (iv) increased Article 6 operationalization discussions, where Africa's priorities are ensuring environmental integrity, equitable benefit-sharing, and carbon market readiness. The conference will thus provide a timely opportunity to equip

African constituencies with the technical and governance structures needed to manage them effectively.

CCDA-XIII will also be held a few weeks after the 40th anniversary of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)—a legacy institution that has shaped Africa's environmental diplomacy and policy influence. The AMCEN@40 High-Level Political Declaration reaffirmed the continent's commitment to environmental stewardship, inclusive governance, and African-driven innovation. It also identified institutional reform, financial viability, and the digitalization of environmental activity as critical areas. CCDA-XIII will, therefore, carry forward this resolution by translating political commitments into technical strategies for climate-resilient infrastructure, climate intelligence systems, green employment, and nature-based solutions—contextualized in African realities, indigenous understanding, and equity.

CCDA-XIII thematic areas also recognized the First Africa Climate Summit (ACS1) deliverables and the Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action. The Nairobi Declaration reaffirmed Africa's determination to make the continent the world's leading hub for climate solutions, through green industrialization, renewable energy, conservation of biodiversity, and human capital. It called for immediate action on climate finance reform, debt relief, carbon pricing, and investment in adaptation and transition minerals. CCDA-XIII, on its part, will explore scaled-up methods to science-informed Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) growth, climate finance restructurings, carbon markets, and transition justice mechanisms—that make Africa's voice technically credible, strategically coherent, and world-projectable.

The conference will be organized by the Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) – an inter-institutional partnership between the African Union Commission (AUC), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the African Development Bank (AfDB) in partnership with the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) and other partners.

2. Background and Rationale

Africa continues to bear disproportionate impacts from climate change, although it has contributed the least to global greenhouse gas emissions. Consequently, in 2024 alone, over 110 million Africans were affected by climate-related catastrophes such as floods, droughts, and heatwaves. The continent is warming more rapidly than the global average, with a rise of 1.28 °C in North Africa. The worsening climate burden has further contributed to gendered impacts such as declining agricultural productivity, increasing food insecurity, and further displacement, particularly among fragile states. For example, cereal crops have decreased by up to 50% in Southern Africa, while climate displacement has impacted over 700,000 people in 2024.

The financial constraints are the largest barrier to Africa's climate response. The implementation of the continent's NDCs by 2030 will require almost \$3 trillion, but Africa receives only 3–4% of international climate finance flows. Adaptation finance is particularly low with needs well exceeding \$160 billion annually, but only limited percentages being

mobilized. As global climate finance rose over \$2 trillion in 2024, the African continent still has limited access within the international financial system mainly due to structural barriers. This figure demonstrates the need for revamped and innovative financing structures responsive to the conditions on the continent.

Despite these barriers, Africa presents significant climate leadership opportunities including through ecosystem stewardship, green industrialization, and nature-based solutions and community-led innovations for climate action. The continent possesses vast renewable energy resources, including 60% of the world's solar potential. Domestic initiatives such as Ethiopia's Green Legacy, the Great Green Wall, and Kenya's near 90% renewable contribution of electricity are exemplary instances of self-sourced solutions. Additionally, carbon sinks in Africa—particularly the Congo Basin, which stores over 1.5 billion tons of CO₂ annually—are ready to be tapped with green finance in carbon markets. The ClimDev-Africa Programme and its ClimDev Special Fund (CDSF) have already provided crucial contributions in terms of the upgrading of meteorological infrastructure, early warning systems, and regional climate centers in 27 African countries.

Africa has also been a front-runner actor in international climate diplomacy. At COP29, developed countries pledged to triple climate finance to developing countries to \$300 billion per year by 2035. Given the figure is small compared to the gravity of the problem, African negotiators are pushing for more ambitious adaptation pledges and the swift operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund. In their parts, regional bodies such as the African Development Bank (AfDB) have responded with concentrated efforts such as the Climate Action Window to finance adaptation efforts in vulnerable countries. These efforts are in line with the Baku Adaptation Roadmap and the Global Early Warning for All (EW4ALL) initiative, which aims to close climate data gaps and reduce disaster risk on the continent.

3. Objectives

The overall objective of the CCDA-XIII is to consolidate and articulate Africa's common, evidence-based, and investment-worthy climate agenda that enhances resilience, triggers green growth, and enhances institutional capacity for leading engagement in global climate negotiations and implementation of continental priorities that directly inform ACS2 and COP30 and aligned with the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022 -2032). Particularly, the conference will aim to:

- Strengthening climate governance and institutional readiness to implement integrated climate policies across key sectors, improve transparency, and build Africa's negotiation leverage in global climate discourses.
- Harnessing nature-based and technology-driven climate solutions, guided by scientific knowledge of current and future climate risks, to inform adaptation and mitigation planning, improve early warning systems, enhance climate information services, and foster scalable solutions for enhanced resilience and green job.
- Advancing gender-responsive locally led adaptation initiatives, while shaping Africa-specific modalities for accessing and tracking the Loss and Damage Fund—

including for non-economic losses, taking into consideration risks related to mobility, peace and security.

- Shifting climate finance from aid to strategic investment by catalyzing innovative financial instruments—such as debt-for-climate swaps, blended finance, direct access modalities, and green investment—to attract public and private capital.
- Fostering equitable and inclusive just transitions by focusing on access to electricity, inclusive value chains for transition minerals, and the creation of decent green jobs ensuring fair labor conditions, gender parity, and community benefit-sharing .
- Promote awareness and understanding of climate risks across the continent, targeting policymakers, African leaders, and institutions to support informed decision-making and build public and political will for climate action.

4. Thematic Pillars

The AU Climate Change Strategy, ACS1 and the ensuing Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action were a watershed in the articulation of Africa's climate narrative—from vulnerability to agency, ambition, and cooperation. The Declaration has called for immediate changes in the architecture of climate finance, a shift from aid to investment, full utilization of the Loss and Damage Fund, and a greater role for Africa in decision-making and benefiting from global carbon markets and green industrialization. This vision is fully supported by the upcoming ACS2.

Being the technical and inclusive platform to ACS2 and COP30, CCDA-XIII is strategically well placed to translate the vision of African climate into aligned technical priorities and policy frameworks that are investment-ready. In mind are recent developments—of which the First Global Stocktake (GST-1), SB62 negotiations, AMCEN outcomes, and COP29 decisions are a few—CCDA-XIII is envisioned five thematic pillars pertinent at the continental level but also strategically at the international level as Africa asserts its rightful place in world climate discourses.

Pillar 1: Climate policy, governance, and institutional readiness

Considering SB62 and UNFCCC's request for stronger Just Transition frameworks, Africa must enhance its institutional foundation to translate commitment into action. This pillar focuses on how regional players like ClimDev-Africa partners, AMCEN, national governments, and multilevel governments can harmonize climate policies for climate-sensitive sectors—agriculture, health, energy, and finance—and internalize transparency, accountability, and legal coherence. This pillar further enables African negotiators to advance unified, strategic positions aligned with Article 6 and the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), and Just Transition plans. Strong institutions are also key to leveraging climate finance, offering locally relevant solutions, and positioning Africa as a cohesive and technically respected voice in the approach to COP30.

Why this pillar matters:

- Low institutional capacity is one of the most significant obstacles to the uptake of climate finance and NDCs implementation.

- Integrating policy enhances efficiency between sectors (agriculture, health, energy, and finance).
- Improves Africa's strategic position in leading up to COP 30 and beyond and with development partners.

Pillar 2: Nature, technology, and climate intelligence

It is fundamental to harness Africa's data and innovation ecosystems in the context of GST-1, climate finance, adaptation and mitigation interventions, and the Global Early Warning for All initiative. Hence, this pillar promotes integration of Indigenous climate knowledge with the most advanced digital technologies—AI-powered analytics, satellite remote sensing, and bias corrected and downscaled climate models—to improve forecasting, resilience planning, and budgeting processes. These Climate Intelligence Systems will facilitate nature-tech synergies like precision agriculture, smart forestry, and ecosystem-based adaptation and others, so that Africa takes global leadership in formulating verifiable and scalable "Nature + Tech" interventions for mitigation and adaptation purposes.

Why it is important:

- Persistent data gaps across African countries undermine evidence-based planning, investment decisions, and cross-sector coordination.
- NATURE-tech synergies need to inform mitigation and adaptation interventions identified in the NDC, NAPs and other policies/strategies.
- Leading digital innovation and green tech business critical to Africa's development trajectories.
- AI for weather and seasonal forecasting enables localized, real-time insights that improve agricultural planning, disaster preparedness, and water resource management.
- Enhanced climate information services and early warning systems are vital to protect lives, reduce economic losses, and inform targeted interventions, especially in vulnerable regions.
- Integrated climate intelligence platforms can support public institutions and private actors with climate-risk analytics, supporting better infrastructure design, financial planning, and ecosystem management.

Pillar 3: Climate adaptation, resilience, loss and damage

Africa's enormous over-\$160 billion a year adaptation finance gap is a call to action for urgent local-driven work. This pillar builds on SB62 achievements on GGA and Loss and Damage through strengthening community-led resilience pathways with community-defined resilience indicators—from climate-resilient smallholder agriculture, water and health infrastructure to flood-resilient infrastructure and early warning systems. It also explores operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund in a way that integrates non-economic losses—cultural heritage, biodiversity, and socio-cultural identity—while ensuring that responses in fragile and conflict-affected settings sustain peace and resilience. This

enables Africa to lead in shaping access modalities that are adaptive to its realities and values.

Why the pillar is important:

- Underscores the largest adaptation finance deficit in the climate finance schemes.
- Highlights Loss and Damage Fund readiness to operate and equitable access modalities.
- Addresses climate-induced mobility, peace, and security risks, ensuring that adaptation and loss and damage responses sustain peace and resilience.
- Selected projects such as participatory mapping or storytelling to be rooted in African values, determine resilience trajectories.

Pillar 4: Climate finance

With firm directions from ACS1 and COP29, the narrative is shifting as climate finance must transition from aid-dependence to sustainable investment logic. This pillar is centered on Africa's readiness under Article 6.2 and 6.4, including setting up MRV registries, benefit-sharing frameworks, and equitable management of carbon credit manufacturing. It also drives financial sector reforms—blended finance, Africa's green bond initiatives or sovereign green rating frameworks, debt-for-climate swaps, taxonomies, and green SME investment vehicles—and lays the foundation for Africa to embrace private capital and recast itself as a climate-smart investment hub than becoming victimhood to climate.

Why it is important

- Africa can potentially supply over 30% of global credits by 2030 if circumstances are favorable as the global demand for carbon credits is on the rise.
- Africa's climate finance must grow from \$30 billion to over \$250 billion annually in 2030 to achieve targets.
- Responsible and good governance must be employed to avoid exploitation while allowing African countries to access climate finance.

Pillar 5: Equitable just transition to facilitate Africa's development

Africa's transition should be equitable, not extractive. This pillar brings the UNFCCC Just Transition Work Programme to reality by specifically emphasis on the phasing-down of fossil fuels, access to clean energy, and green work opportunities. It puts forward value chain development around critical minerals in a way that safeguards workers through social protection, reskilling initiatives, and participatory transition planning such as social dialogue, labor assessments, or participatory roadmap design. With more than 600 million Africans lacking electricity access and the continent poised to supply critical energy minerals, this pillar makes green growth work for people.

Why it matters:

- Over 600 million Africans lack access to electricity.

- Transition of minerals (cobalt, lithium, graphite, etc.) offer industrialization opportunities as well as risk of exploitation.
- Green jobs and inclusive policies should be at the heart of a safe and just transition with attention to youth empowerment, gender equity, and intersectional inclusion.

The five pillars of CCDA-XIII together lead to technologically sound and politically agreeable blueprint for climate action in Africa. The conference will, therefore, provide a common platform to respond to Africa's specific vulnerabilities, harness its strategic opportunities, and enrich global climate debate with African realities and aspirations.

5. Expected Outcomes

CCDA-XIII findings lead the way to unified, evidence-based, and solution-oriented African voice—not only at ACS2 and COP30, but at the G20, UNGA, and anywhere else. Thus, CCDA-XIII is expected to deliver the following outcomes:

- A technical position paper consolidating recommendations across the five pillars for submission to the African Leader's the Addis Ababa Declaration;
- Guidance notes and policy briefs on GST-1 integration, carbon market access, and the Loss and Damage;
- Press releases on investment-ready and evidence-based climate action agenda that improves resilience, green growth stimulation, and institutional preparedness for effective global climate negotiations and continental priority implementation

6. Participants

CCDA-XIII participants will be a representative mix of stakeholders, including:

- Governments and negotiators of African countries;
- Regional economic communities (RECs), Regional Climate Centres;
- UN agencies, multilateral and bilateral partners;
- Private investors, commercial banks, and climate-focused funds;
- Think tanks, academia, and research and policy institutions;
- Civil society, private sectors, youth and women organizations, Indigenous networks, and local innovators as well as actors from national and subnational levels.