

## **Ninth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa**

Theme: Towards a just transition that delivers jobs, prosperity and climate resilience in Africa: leveraging the green and blue economy

### **Concept note**





The African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Africa and the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance, in collaboration with the Government of Cabo Verde, are convening the Ninth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa from 13 to 17 September 2021 in Sal Island, Cabo Verde, under the theme “Towards a just transition that delivers jobs, prosperity and climate resilience in Africa: leveraging the green and blue economy”.

## Context

Climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss have informed recent debate on the relationship between development and sustainability. This is reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and Agenda 2063 of the African Union, which were all adopted with a view to promoting human well-being while also ensuring environmental and ecosystem health. Climate change has emerged as the most pressing challenge impeding the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations, goals and targets of Agenda 2063. It is critical that the objectives of the Paris Agreement on climate change are met if those development aspirations are to be attained.

Article 2 of the Paris Agreement<sup>1</sup> provides that the objectives of the Agreement are to “...strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, including by: (a) Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change; (b) Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production; and (c) Making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development”.

Article 2 further states that the Agreement “...will be implemented to reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances”.

Nonetheless, global action on climate change remains lukewarm, while regions such as Africa that have contributed little to anthropogenic warming and have limited capacity to adapt to climate change continue to suffer disproportionately from climate impacts.

Recent extreme weather events attributable to climate change in many countries, in tandem with ongoing challenges posed by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, serve as a timely reminder of the urgency for concerted global action to tackle climate change, particularly as countries are now preparing to attend the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which will take place in Glasgow in the United Kingdom in November 2021. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Statement on the State of the Global Climate 2019, published in 2020, paints an alarming picture of the impact of climate change, while in its provisional report

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<sup>1</sup> For further information on the Paris Agreement, and the full text of the Agreement, see: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, *What is the Paris Agreement?* Available at: [www.unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement](http://www.unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement).

entitled “State of the Global Climate 2020”<sup>2</sup>, WMO also emphasized that the global mean temperature in 2020 was  $1.2 \pm 0.1$  °C above the 1850–1900 baseline.

Over the years, Africa has displayed strong leadership on climate action. All African countries, with the exception of Eritrea and Libya, have ratified the Paris Agreement and endorsed ambitious nationally determined contributions to the global response to climate change, which, it is estimated, will require close to \$3 trillion to implement. For most African countries to implement their nationally determined contributions, climate finance will prove critical. In the run up to the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties, and in line with their duties under the terms of the Paris Agreement, 21 African countries have already submitted revised and more ambitious nationally determined contributions. All Parties to the Paris Agreement, and particularly developed countries, must shoulder their responsibilities with regard to climate action. Globally, countries’ nationally determined contributions at present make it likely that the world is on track to experience some 3 degrees of warming, with warming particularly severe in Africa. In that connection, it is estimated that climate change is now reducing the GDP of African countries by between 2 and 5 per cent, and, in some countries, possibly by as much as 15 per cent, while some African countries are diverting between 2 and 9 per cent of their budgets to respond to diverse climate change impacts. Meanwhile, there is growing momentum, including in Africa, for a clean energy transition and net zero emissions by 2050. It remains challenging, however, for African countries to secure adequate and predictable climate finance to support the achievement of that objective, particularly as developed countries have consistently failed to uphold their commitment to provide \$100 billion per year in climate finance.

The COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the economic situation of all African countries and has plunged the continent into its first recession in some 30 years. All countries now face severe liquidity challenges that make the mobilization of domestic resources for climate action even more difficult. Meanwhile, developed countries, the countries, most responsible for climate change today, have put in place stimulus packages for their economies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but have provided very little support to African countries. At the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties, African countries, many of which face combined health, economic and climate change crises, must articulate clearly what they will require from the international community in order to achieve a just transition and ensure that the Paris Agreement delivers for the continent.

Ambitious action on climate is required to keep the warming of the planet as far below 2 degrees Celsius as possible in order to ensure a prosperous and healthy future for humanity. Such action, underpinned by the Paris Agreement on climate change, seeks to transition the global economy from fossil fuel dependency to zero carbon emissions. Such a transition is possible, but requires rapid social, sectoral and economic transformation on an unprecedented scale. The terms of that transformation, including requisite timelines are heavily contested. In that connection, the Race to Zero campaign has been launched with the overarching objective of mobilizing all relevant stakeholders to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest. Furthermore, the Climate Action Pathways, a vital part of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, set out sector-specific plans that will accelerate the systemic transformation required to achieve a zero carbon future.

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<sup>2</sup> WMO, *State of the Global Climate 2020: Provisional Report*. Available at: [www.library.wmo.int/doc\\_num.php?explnum\\_id=10444](http://www.library.wmo.int/doc_num.php?explnum_id=10444).

Africa is often described as the continent most at risk in terms of the negative impact of climate change, both because of the scale of the expected change itself and because of the perceived lack of capacity of Africans and their Governments to mitigate and adapt to that change. Increasingly, climate change is seen as disadvantaging Africa to the extent that the continent may have to forego the exploitation of its carbon fossil assets in order to leapfrog to carbon neutrality in its development paradigms. This is particularly pertinent as there is a linear link between carbon fossil fuel use and development. Those economies that have contributed the most to historical greenhouse gas emissions tend to have high gross domestic product (GDP) levels, while those that burn the least fossil fuels are characterized by low GDP levels<sup>3</sup>. Even within the African continent itself, more developed economies tend to enjoy significantly better access to energy than poorer economies. In that connection, the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change Impacts is of critical importance for African and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

### Nationally determined contributions

While African countries are particularly vulnerable to and indeed are being severely affected by climate change, they have also presented proposals for ambitious climate actions in their nationally determined contributions, albeit with the expectation of conditional support.

Their ambition is not matched by that of developed countries, giving rise to tensions in negotiations on the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Those tensions were apparent at the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, where the Parties failed to reach agreement in a number of areas, including, in particular, implementation of article 6 of the Paris Agreement. Those tensions have resulted, inter alia, in the notion of a “just transition” gaining traction in African climate policy considerations.

### A just transition

The concept of a “just transition” refers to deliberate efforts to plan for and invest in a transition to environmentally and socially sustainable jobs, sectors and economies. It originated in the 1990s in the North American labour movement with a focus on support programmes for workers who had lost their jobs due to environmental protection policies, and has broadened in scope ever since.

As understanding of the climate crisis grew, workers’ unions began to link the concept of a just transition specifically to action on climate change. They also began campaigning to insert the concept into international regimes, including negotiations held within the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>4</sup>. This culminated in the inclusion of the concept in the preamble to the Paris Agreement, which provides, inter alia: “Taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities ...”. The notion of a just transition is also enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals, and particularly in Goal 1, on poverty eradication, Goal 7, on access to clean energy for all, Goal 8,

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<sup>3</sup> For further information, see: African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), “Fossil Fuels in Africa in the Context of a Carbon Constrained Future”. Working Paper No. 12 (2011). Available at: [www.uneca.org/acpc/publications](http://www.uneca.org/acpc/publications).

<sup>4</sup> For further information, see: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Just Transition Centre, *Just Transition: A Report for the OECD* (2017). Available at: [www.oecd.org/environment/cc/g20-climate/collapsecontents/Just-Transition-Centre-report-just-transition.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/g20-climate/collapsecontents/Just-Transition-Centre-report-just-transition.pdf).

on sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and Goal 13, on climate action.

It is now generally agreed that a just transition encompasses a commitment to human well-being (with respect to income, education and health) and to sustainability (with respect to decarbonization, resource efficiency and ecosystem restoration)<sup>5</sup>.

While the concept of a just transition is invoked in efforts to link development to sustainability, the relationship between sustainability and development is complex. Although the concept is enshrined in the preamble of the Paris Agreement, it only came to prominence in the negotiations that took place within the context of the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Katowice, Poland in 2018. The intense debate in Katowice was premised on the labour movement principles stemming from a just transition, namely the creation of green and decent jobs, poverty eradication and community resilience. For the climate justice movement, however, the concept of a just transition encompasses a wide range of strategies for community transformation that can facilitate the emergence of thriving economies providing dignified, productive and ecologically sustainable livelihoods, democratic governance and ecological resilience<sup>6</sup>.

Just transition narratives in developed countries are driven primarily by concerns over job losses and the quality of alternative employment<sup>7</sup>. This is because of the labour market origins of the discourse, but also because the economies of developed countries are based on “mature” fossil fuel exploitation paradigms. Many developed countries have thus implemented extensive just transition programmes to protect workers as they transition away from fossil fuels. Examples include Australia, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which, however, have all had only limited success in achieving their objectives in that regard. In January 2020, within the context of the European Green Deal Investment Plan, the European Union launched the Just Transition Mechanism, in order to alleviate the socioeconomic impact of the transition on regions, industries and workers that will face the greatest challenges<sup>8</sup>.

Many developing countries, particularly in the global South, have yet to implement explicit measures to realize a just transition. In Africa, the just transition narrative is still in its infancy. However, the main concerns of the continent are pivoted around the need to safeguard the continent’s right to sustainable development using the resources that are at its disposal, including recently discovered and as yet unexploited fossil fuel reserves. A significant proportion of recently discovered deposits of coal, gas and oil are to be found in Africa. However, if the targets of the Paris Agreement are to be met within the time limit recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), those recently discovered fossil fuels must stay in the ground, while those that African countries are currently exploiting should be rapidly retired. This creates several challenges for the continent’s policymakers and

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<sup>5</sup> Mark Swilling, Josephine Musango and Jeremy Wakeford, “Developmental States and Sustainability Transitions: Prospects of a Just Transition in South Africa”, *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, vol. 18, issue 5: The Politics of Transition (4 November 2015).

<sup>6</sup> For further information, see: *Climate Justice Alliance. Just Transition A Framework for Change*. Available at: [www.climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/](http://www.climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/).

<sup>7</sup> Robert Pollin and Brian Callaci, *The Economics of Just Transition: A Framework for Supporting Fossil Fuel-Dependent Workers and Communities in the United States* (University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Political Economy Research Institute, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> For further information, see: [www.ceep.be/the-just-transition-mechanism-explained/](http://www.ceep.be/the-just-transition-mechanism-explained/).

development planners. In the recent past, the discovery of oil and gas reserves was viewed as a massive economic windfall, creating windows of opportunity for impoverished economies to finally achieve their development goals. In many instances, however, often as a result of weak governance mechanisms, countries with significant oil and gas reserves have suffered what has been dubbed the “resource curse” and the envisaged economic windfall has failed to materialize. Although many African countries have now resolved their governance challenges, they are faced with the prospective of having to forego use of resources that have underpinned the global industrialization process.

Africa has enormous reserves of fossil fuels, estimated at 9.5 per cent, 8 per cent and 4 per cent of total proven global reserves of crude oil, natural gas and coal, respectively. Together, those resources are the equivalent of some 50 per cent of total energy supply and one third of energy consumption in Africa. Many of those resources are used outside Africa or remain undeveloped for use within the continent<sup>9</sup>. More strikingly, and despite its massive energy generating potential, the continent continues to face enormous energy challenges, including low levels of access to modern energy, inadequate energy infrastructure, and a lack of institutional and technical capacity to exploit its energy resources. For example, only about 31 per cent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa enjoy access to electricity, with electrification rates in urban and rural areas currently at about 60 and 14 per cent respectively. Furthermore, traditional biomass continues to dominate energy consumption in the region, and accounted for about 50 per cent of total energy supply in Africa in 2008. Those energy challenges have hampered economic growth and exacerbated both economic and energy poverty on the continent. Despite these challenges, its vast fossil fuel reserves could provide Africa with significant opportunities to accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty.

The distribution of fossil fuel deposits across the continent is uneven, however. Over 80 per cent of African oil reserves and 90 per cent of the continent’s natural gas reserves are found in North and West Africa. Libya accounts for over 70 per cent of oil reserves in North Africa while Algeria accounts for approximately 55 per cent of natural gas reserves in the same subregion. Nigeria accounts for almost all oil and natural gas reserves in West Africa. In addition, three countries, namely Angola, Libya, Nigeria account for some 80 per cent of proven oil reserves on the continent. The distribution of energy resources across the continent is, if anything, even more uneven given that South Africa accounts for approximately 95 per cent of the continent’s coal reserves. Nevertheless, proven crude oil reserves in Africa continue to rise, and increased from 58.7 billion barrels in 1990 to some 132.1 billion barrels in 2010.

While clean energy alternatives are available, the envisaged costs of the continent’s transition to clean energy are daunting, and there is as yet no agreement as to who will be responsible for covering the opportunity costs of that transition, financing the development and roll out of innovative technologies, or mitigating the potential impact of radical climate actions on the development prospects of the continent. At the same time, the continent’s populations remain among the world’s poorest, with low levels of employment, high levels of energy poverty, and limited industrialization. Current investments in clean energy are woefully inadequate to address those gaps.

To be sure, some of the continent’s more developed economies already exploit fossil fuels on a large scale. In South Africa, coal is used to generate 90 per cent of the country’s electricity and is a major source of foreign exchange and employment. In 2016, the coal industry in South Africa provided jobs to 77,506 people directly, and indirectly created a further

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<sup>9</sup> ACPC, “Fossil Fuels in Africa in the Context of a Carbon Constrained Future”.

173,093 jobs mainly in the transport and storage sectors. In recognition of the need to transition to a greener future, South Africa's nationally determined contribution elaborates a peak-plateau-decline trajectory for carbon emissions. The country has also ratified the Integrated Resource Plan, an electricity roadmap for the period from 2019 to 2030, pursuant to which South Africa is committed to a decarbonization pathway that will entail the decommissioning of coal-fired power stations and the rapid development and roll out of renewable energy infrastructure. By so doing, South Africa may have positioned itself to be the first coal-based economy in the global South to successfully transition to renewable energy. The situation in South Africa is unique, however, *inter alia* because its power generation capacity depends on an ageing fleet of coal-fired power stations that, in any case, are due to be decommissioned within the next 20 years.

That notwithstanding, even the country's Integrated Resource Plan does not set out a strategy for an economy-wide just transition. The fact that investors and consumers are progressively moving out of fossil fuels, and the continent's continued reliance on foreign direct investment and development assistance, mean that the expectation that African countries can continue to rely on fossil fuels to drive development and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals needs to be reviewed. Furthermore, opportunities to benefit from the clean energy transition, particularly in terms of processing the inputs required for that transition (including rare-earth elements, lithium, cobalt and other minerals) have yet to be fully exploited. It is thus essential that, in conjunction with their revised nationally determined contributions, African countries develop and implement plans for a just transition at the earliest opportunity.

Countries that are heavily dependent on fossil fuels should also start preparing for a fiscal transition away from revenues derived from fossil fuel extraction and consumption. The transition to clean energy offers alternatives to fossil fuels and thus can lead to the decrease in government revenues in two ways: through a drop in fossil fuel prices and, in the long term, through a reduction in fossil fuel extraction and consumption patterns. Governments therefore need to prepare for a reduction in the revenue they receive from fossil fuels. In many instances, governments also provide subsidies to support both fossil fuel production and consumption. Phasing out those subsidies in a socially equitable way will both increase government revenues and accelerate the transition.

The transition will not be easy, however. The costs of transitioning will be very high, and it is not clear how African countries will successfully mobilize the financial resources needed. African Governments should, as a matter of urgency, explore ways to restructure their economies and accelerate the transition to a green future.

### **Resilience and recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic: challenges and opportunities**

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has caused millions of infections and fatalities worldwide. Many public health systems have been strained beyond capacity, while lockdowns and other containment measures have wreaked havoc on the global economy. Undoubtedly, the repercussions of the pandemic will be felt for many years to come and will take many years to understand fully. In parallel, a huge amount of information, including disinformation and conspiracy theories, has spread faster than the pandemic itself, hampering effective responses and the adoption of social and behavioural changes that can help prevent the spread of the disease. This has caused confusion and distrust among people, jeopardized collective efforts, including vaccination campaigns, and put lives at risk. The United Nations has recognized the phenomenon as an "infodemic". Although this is not a new phenomenon, it has increased



dramatically during the COVID-19 crisis. Meanwhile, an ongoing climate change “infodemic” has made it difficult for the general public to find reliable and accurate information on the causes and impact of climate change. Despite the unprecedented health and economic challenges stemming from the COVID-19 crisis, however, the ongoing pandemic also offers opportunities for a just transition, both in Africa and beyond.

There are clear links between human health and the environment. Biodiversity loss and communities’ proximity to wildlife can create conditions that facilitate the spread of disease. Rising temperatures have been linked with changes in the geographical distribution of disease-spreading mosquitoes and the incidence of malaria and Zika virus disease. Biodiversity can, however, act as a buffer against the spread of pathogens. Healthy ecosystems translate into resilient and healthy societies.

The Fifth Assessment Report of IPCC highlights the key role played by vector organisms in transmitting infectious diseases and underscores that climate change may alter the distribution of vector species. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, a joint meeting of IPCC and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services had been planned for May 2020 to explore the relationship between biodiversity and climate change. Regrettably, the ongoing crisis meant that the planned meeting had to be postponed.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus global vulnerabilities to zoonotic diseases. The mutation that allowed the COVID-19 virus to leap from an animal host to humans probably resulted from the increasing proximity between humans and wildlife, in turn caused by the inexorable expansion of agriculture into previously uncultivated areas. The rapid mutation of viruses is, moreover, likely to be exacerbated by the fact that increasing numbers of domestic livestock are being raised in factory-farm conditions. It is likely that the COVID-19 pandemic is closely linked to climate change and numerous lessons can be learned from the global COVID-19 response. Furthermore, although all countries are vulnerable to the impact of climate change, developing countries are likely to be disproportionately affected as a result of structural and historical factors that limit their capacity to absorb the costs associated with climate-related events, including droughts, floods and heatwaves, as well as their capacity to reorient their economies so that they operate efficiently and sustainably. Moreover, without external assistance, they will find it difficult to take advantage of the opportunities stemming from the global response to climate change, including by investing in clean renewable energy, climate proofing infrastructure, or adopting smart agriculture options. It is estimated that COVID-19 will reduce global GDP by as much as 5 per cent. The impact of climate change in Africa is already costing most African economies between 3 and 5 per cent of GDP annually, with some countries incurring losses of up to 10 per cent.

The dramatic collapse of crude oil prices in the wake of the pandemic-induced global economic slowdown has made it uneconomical to explore and exploit “marginal” fossil fuel reserves. Indeed, the prospecting for potential reserves that was taking place across Africa prior to the COVID-19 pandemic has been sharply curtailed by fossil fuel price collapses in global markets, as has the optimism previously voiced by many stakeholders that the discovery of viable reserves could bolster economic growth in many African countries. Although prices are expected to rebound, the nature of the recovery remains unclear, particularly as there are now growing calls for a green post-pandemic trajectory. In the light of those challenges, it is clear that African countries must urgently develop appropriate transition plans to guide development in a carbon-constrained world.

There are, moreover growing calls for far-reaching post-COVID-19 transformative actions to address both health and climate change challenges. Such transformative actions should not only be about just transitions in a limited number of sectors, but should be based on broad approaches that address the underlying causes of vulnerability and facilitate the development of mechanisms to ensure that no one is left behind.

### **Objectives of the Ninth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa**

The Conference is being convened with a view to launching a continent-wide debate on what a just transition and green recovery for Africa should look like, and developing appropriate frameworks to support African countries in their efforts to design and implement Africa-led solutions for a green recovery, a just transition, and climate resilience that fosters prosperity, the creation of decent jobs and environmental integrity, while also strengthening the continent's voice and agency in global climate negotiations. Specifically, the Conference aims to:

- Leverage African voices to support urgent and ambitious global action on climate change;
- Support increased ambition in nationally determined contributions, and facilitate discussions on ways to mobilize the resources needed to ensure African countries achieve their contribution targets, promote the green/blue economy and achieve related goals;
- Discuss mechanisms for calculating the costs of transition, and debate how that transition should be financed and how Africa can reap the rewards stemming from an Africa-relevant just transition framework;
- Take stock of the challenges and opportunities stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, and discuss how they can be leveraged by countries to achieve actionable climate solutions for Africa and small island developing States;
- Reflect on the continent's journey in global climate negotiations and identify strategies for strengthening the position of Africa in that process, inter alia, by drawing on lessons learned within the context of the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Format of the Ninth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa**

The Ninth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa will adopt the traditional conference format. The first two days will be set aside for pre-events by development partners. The high-level segment, consisting of the opening session, keynote addresses and high-level ministerial panels, will take place on the third day (the first main day of the Conference). The technical segment of the Conference, consisting of eight parallel sessions, will take place on day four (the second main day of the Conference). The third main day of the Conference will be dubbed "Climate Information Services Day". A key event that is planned for that day is the Obasi Lecture, to be delivered in memory of the late Godwin Olu Patrick Obasi, a former Secretary-General of WMO, and in honour of his legacy and the contributions of African scientists to the evolution of climate change science and discourse.

**Plenary tracks:**

- Ensuring a just transition and the development of a multilateral climate framework that delivers for the continent: the African position at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- Ensuring that twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties and the Paris Agreement deliver development, prosperity and environmental integrity for Africa;
- Building forward better for a resilient Africa.

**Parallel session tracks:**

- The Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: implications and lessons for Africa;
- Energy transformation and green recovery in Africa: what constitutes a just transition? Understanding nuances and emerging issues in Africa in the context of the global drive for net-zero emissions by 2050;
- Adaptation through agriculture, food security and nature-based solutions: scope and scale for building resilience and leveraging climate finance;
- Climate change and human insecurity: from challenges to opportunities;
- Financing ambitious nationally determined contributions in Africa: the critical roles of climate finance, the private sector, and innovative domestic resource mobilization;
- Can carbon markets work for Africa? Challenges and opportunities;
- Regional climate information service initiatives;
- Leveraging technology to catalyze urgent action to combat climate change and mitigate its impact.

The Conference will conclude with the adoption of an outcome document that will include key messages formulated at the high-level and technical sessions. Those messages will be widely disseminated and presented as a call to action to global high-level events on climate change. Since this is the first time that the Conference will be hosted by an island nation, the particular challenges facing small island developing States will be also mainstreamed into Conference discussions as a special interest cross-cutting focus theme.

Due to COVID-19-related restrictions, the Conference will be held using a hybrid model of participation, in which participants will be able to attend either virtually or in-person. All measures will be taken to ensure the safety of all participants who decide to travel to Cabo Verde. For those attending in person, the use of face masks will be compulsory, while social distancing measures will be maintained and health and hygiene facilities will be made available around the clock. Participants will be updated on the requirements for travelling to Cabo Verde when registering to attend the Conference.

## Participants

The Conference will be attended by a wide range of stakeholders, including the following:

- Policymakers and technocrats, including African parliamentarians, representatives of African ministries of finance and economic planning, and members of the African Group of Negotiators on Climate Change;
  - Members of the Climate Research for Development in Africa initiative, in addition to academics and scientists from research institutions, universities and regional climate centres;
  - Members of civil society organizations, including those representing women, farmers, young people, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons and refugees;
  - Decision makers from local government, cities and regions;
  - Development partners;
  - Representatives of international organizations;
  - Private sector stakeholders.
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