

# **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 serve as a key technical gathering that provides a key foundation for the Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2). It is scheduled to take place from September 5 to 7, 2025, in Addis Ababa. The conference will bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, governments, academia and research communities, civil society, Indigenous Peoples, youth, and private sector actors, to promote African-led, evidence-based climate action. The focus will be on strengthening resilience, fostering green growth, and scaling up climate finance, all in support of implementing 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,"* aligns 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, scaling adaptation and resilience, and transforming climate finance from aid to investment. Throughout, CCDA-XIII will provide a vital technical foundation to support Africa's unified voice at ACS2 and the Conference of the Parties (COP30) in Belém, aiming to promote policy coherence, evidence-based advice, and continent-wide priorities. It will solidify the continent's shared vision for climate justice, a green economy, and financial reform by connecting science, policy, and investment; amplifying grassroots voices and bottom-up governance; and scaling African solutions as global models for prosperity and resilience.

CCDA-XIII thematic areas also consider the outcomes of the 62nd Subsidiary Bodies (SB62) sessions in Bonn, which emphasized the need for effective climate implementation. These include: (i) the design modalities and equitable access to the Loss and Damage Fund, (ii) developing the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) framework, (iii) a renewed focus on just transitions, particularly within the UNFCCC Just Transition Work Programme, and (iv) increased discussions on operationalizing Article 6, with Africa's priorities being environmental integrity, equitable benefit-sharing, and readiness for carbon markets. The conference will provide a timely opportunity to equip African constituencies with the technical and governance structures needed to manage these effectively.

CCDA-XIII will also take place a few weeks after the 40th anniversary of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)—a key institution that has influenced Africa's environmental diplomacy and policies. The AMCEN@40 High-Level Political Declaration reaffirmed the continent's dedication to environmental stewardship, inclusive governance, and African-led innovation. It also highlighted the importance of institutional reform, financial sustainability, and the digitalization of environmental efforts. CCDA-XIII will build on this commitment by turning political pledges into technical strategies for climate-resilient infrastructure, climate intelligence systems, green jobs, and nature-based solutions—implemented with African realities, indigenous knowledge, and a focus on equity.

CCDA-XIII thematic areas also acknowledged the deliverables of the First Africa Climate Summit (ACS1) and the Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action. The Nairobi Declaration reaffirmed Africa's commitment to making the continent the world's leading center for climate solutions through green industrialization, renewable energy, biodiversity conservation, and human capital development. It called for urgent action on climate finance reform, debt relief, carbon pricing, and investments in adaptation and transition minerals. CCDA-XIII, in turn, will seek expanded methods to enhance science-informed Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) growth, climate finance restructuring, carbon markets, and transition justice mechanisms—aimed at making Africa's voice technically credible, strategically coherent, and globally influential.

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

## **2. Background and Rationale**

Africa continues to experience disproportionate impacts from climate change, despite contributing the least to global greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, over 110 million Africans were affected by climate-related disasters such as floods, droughts, and heatwaves in 2024 alone. The continent is warming faster than the global average, with North Africa experiencing a rise of 1.28 °C. The increasing climate burden has further led to gendered effects like declining agricultural productivity, rising food insecurity, and more displacement, especially in fragile states. For instance, cereal crop yields have dropped by up to 50% in Southern Africa, and climate-related displacement has affected over 700,000 people in 2024.

Financial constraints are the biggest obstacle to Africa's climate actions. Achieving the continent's NDCs by 2030 will require nearly \$3 trillion, yet Africa receives only 3–4% of international climate finance flows. Adaptation funding is especially low, with needs surpassing \$160 billion annually, but only a small proportion is being mobilized. Although global climate finance exceeded \$2 trillion in 2024, Africa still faces limited access within the international financial system, mainly due to structural barriers. This highlights the urgent need for revamped and innovative financing structures tailored to the continent's conditions.

Despite these challenges, Africa offers notable opportunities for climate leadership through ecosystem stewardship, green industrialization, nature-based solutions, and community-led initiatives for climate action. The continent has vast renewable energy resources, including 60% of the world's solar potential. Domestic projects like Ethiopia's Green Legacy, the Great Green Wall, and Kenya's nearly 90% renewable energy contribution to electricity exemplify self-sourced solutions. Additionally, Africa's carbon sinks—especially the Congo Basin, which stores over 1.5 billion tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually—are ready to be developed with green finance in carbon markets. The ClimDev-Africa Programme and its ClimDev Special Fund (CDSF) have already made vital contributions by upgrading meteorological infrastructure, establishing early warning systems, and developing regional climate centers in 27 African countries.

Africa has also been a leading player in international climate diplomacy. At COP29, developed countries pledged to triple climate finance to developing nations, reaching \$300 billion annually by 2035. Considering the amount is small compared to the severity of the problem, African negotiators are advocating for more ambitious adaptation commitments and the quick implementation of the Loss and Damage Fund. Meanwhile, regional organizations like the African Development Bank (AfDB) have responded with targeted initiatives such as the Climate Action Window to fund adaptation efforts in vulnerable countries. These initiatives align with the Baku Adaptation Roadmap and the Global Early Warning for All (EW4ALL) initiative, which seek to bridge climate data gaps and decrease disaster risks across the continent.

### **3. Objectives**

The overall goal of the CCDA-XIII is to unify and present Africa's common, evidence-based, and investment-worthy climate agenda that boosts resilience, promotes green growth, and improves institutional capacity for effective participation in global climate negotiations and the implementation of continental priorities that directly inform ACS2 and COP30. This aligns with the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032). Specifically, the conference will aim to:

- Strengthen climate governance and institutional readiness to implement integrated climate policies across key sectors, improve transparency, and increase Africa's negotiation leverage in global climate discussions.
- Harness nature-based and technology-driven climate solutions, guided by scientific understanding of current and future climate risks, to inform adaptation and mitigation planning, improve early warning systems, enhance climate information services, and promote scalable solutions for greater resilience and green jobs.
- Advance gender-responsive, locally led adaptation initiatives, while developing Africa-specific methods for accessing and tracking the Loss and Damage Fund—including for non-economic losses—while considering risks related to mobility, peace, and security.

- Transition climate finance from aid to strategic investment by catalyzing innovative financial tools—such as debt-for-climate swaps, blended finance, direct access modalities, and green investments—to attract both public and private capital.
- Promote equitable and inclusive just transitions by focusing on access to electricity, inclusive value chains for transition minerals, and creating decent green jobs that ensure fair labor conditions, gender equality, and community benefit-sharing.
- Increase 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 support for climate action.

## 4. Thematic Pillars

The AU Climate Change Strategy, ACS1, and the subsequent Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action marked a major turning point in Africa's climate story—from depicting vulnerability to emphasizing agency, ambition, and cooperation. The Declaration urges immediate reforms in climate finance structures, advocating a shift from aid to investments, full deployment of the Loss and Damage Fund, and a stronger role for Africa in decision-making and gaining benefits from global carbon markets and green industrialization. The upcoming ACS2 fully aligns with this vision.

As the technical and inclusive platform for ACS2 and COP30, CCDA-XIII is strategically positioned to translate Africa's climate vision into coordinated technical priorities and policy frameworks that are ready for investment. Considering recent developments—such as the First Global Stocktake (GST-1), SB62 negotiations, AMCEN outcomes, and COP29 decisions—CCDA-XIII is designed around five thematic pillars that are relevant both at the continental level and strategically at the international level, as Africa asserts its rightful voice in global climate discussions.

### Pillar 1: Climate policy, governance, and institutional readiness

Given SB62 and UNFCCC's call for stronger Just Transition frameworks, Africa must strengthen its institutional base to turn commitments into real progress. This pillar emphasizes how regional actors, including ClimDev-Africa partners, AMCEN, national governments, and multilevel authorities, can coordinate climate policies across sectors like agriculture, health, energy, and finance—integrating transparency, accountability, and legal consistency. It also supports African negotiators in pursuing unified, strategic positions aligned with Article 6, the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), and Just Transition plans. Strong institutions are crucial for accessing climate finance, providing locally relevant solutions, and establishing Africa as a united and credible voice at COP30.

Why this pillar matters:

- Low institutional capacity is one of the biggest barriers to accessing climate finance and implementing NDCs.
- Integrating policies improves efficiency across sectors (agriculture, health, energy, and finance).
- Strengthens Africa's strategic position ahead of COP 30 and beyond, along with development partners.

## **Pillar 2: Nature, technology, and climate intelligence**

It is essential to leverage Africa's data and innovation ecosystems within the framework of GST-1, climate finance, adaptation and mitigation efforts, and the Global Early Warning for All initiative. Therefore, this pillar encourages the integration of Indigenous climate knowledge with cutting-edge digital technologies—such as AI-powered analytics, satellite remote sensing, and bias-corrected, downscaled climate models—to enhance forecasting, resilience planning, and budgeting. These Climate Intelligence Systems will support nature-tech collaborations, including precision agriculture, smart forestry, and ecosystem-based adaptation, among others, allowing Africa to assume a leadership role worldwide in developing verifiable and scalable "Nature + Tech" solutions for mitigation and adaptation.

Why is it important:

- Persistent data gaps across African countries weaken evidence-based planning, investment choices, and cross-sector coordination.
- NATURE-tech synergies need to guide mitigation and adaptation efforts outlined in the NDC, NAPs, and other policies or strategies.
- Leading digital innovation and green tech businesses are essential for Africa's development paths.
- AI for weather and seasonal forecasting provides localized, real-time insights that enhance agricultural planning, disaster preparedness, and water resource management.
- Improved climate information services and early warning systems are crucial to protect lives, minimize economic losses, and guide targeted actions, especially in vulnerable areas.
- Integrated climate intelligence platforms can assist public institutions and private entities with climate-risk analytics, enabling better infrastructure planning, financial decisions, 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 locally 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 clear directions from ACS1 and COP29, the narrative is shifting as climate finance must move from aid dependence to a focus on sustainable investment. This pillar concentrates on Africa's readiness under Article 6.2 and 6.4, including establishing MRV registries, benefit-sharing frameworks, and fair management of carbon credit production. It also promotes financial sector reforms—such as blended finance, Africa's green bond initiatives, sovereign green rating frameworks, debt-for-climate swaps, taxonomies, and green SME investment vehicles—and sets the stage for Africa to attract private capital and reposition itself as a climate-smart investment hub rather than a victim of climate change.

Why is it 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 fair, not exploitative. This pillar supports the UNFCCC Just Transition Work Programme by focusing on reducing fossil fuel use, expanding access to clean energy, and creating green jobs. It promotes developing value chains around critical minerals while protecting workers through social safety nets, retraining programs, and inclusive planning, such as social dialogue, labor assessments, or participatory roadmap creation. With over 600 million Africans lacking electricity and the continent set to supply essential energy minerals, this pillar aims to ensure that green growth benefits people.

Why it matters:

- Over 600 million Africans lack access to electricity.
- Transition of minerals (cobalt, lithium, graphite, etc.) offers 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 a 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 pave the way for a united, evidence-based, and solution-focused African voice—not only at ACS2 and COP30, but also at the G20, UNGA, and elsewhere. Therefore, CCDA-XIII is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- A technical position paper consolidating recommendations across the five pillars for submission to the African Leaders at 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 agendas that enhance resilience, stimulate green growth, and strengthen 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.

## 7. Conclusion

CCDA-XIII will serve as a launchpad for Africa's climate leadership, connecting science, finance, and justice to promote resilient development. By turning ambition into action, the conference will create a unified, investment-ready agenda that positions Africa as a global leader in climate solutions.

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