



Ensuring that COP27 is Truly an 'African COP'

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Executive summary

Egypt will host the next UN Conference of Parties (COP) meeting in November 2022, making it an opportune moment for Africa to elevate its voice in global climate negotiations and try to advance its common priorities. Under the theme, 'Together for Implementation', COP27 will continue to push for negotiations to move beyond dialogue by demonstrating decisive action and supporting the implementation of current pledges and commitments.

While there is optimism that the outcome will align with African interests, COP27 takes place in a turbulent global geopolitical setting, with a climate standoff between the US and China and a new scramble for fossil fuels in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war. In addition, developing countries have ongoing social justice concerns about the socio-economic impacts of a transition away from fossil fuels. A successful COP27 cannot be achieved without a socially just outcome for developing countries, with financial delivery at its core.

Introduction

COP27 will continue to push for negotiations to move beyond dialogue by demonstrating decisive action and supporting the implementation of current pledges and commitments

The 27th UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP is scheduled to take place in Egypt from 7-18 November 2022. This will be the first time COP is hosted on the African continent since 2016, when Morocco hosted COP22. This year's COP will address much of the unfinished business of the COP26 Glasgow Climate Summit, convened in November 2021. This includes addressing the potentially negative externalities of climate policies and the need for a just transition, establishing the necessary financial structures to support loss and damage, enhancing adaptation and implementing climate policies.

African priorities for COP27

Africa is the continent most impacted by the effects of climate change yet contributes a mere 4% of global emissions.¹ As such, equity and climate justice are at the heart of its

¹ Rama Yade, "Climate Change Will Not Be Fixed without Africa", Atlantic Council, April 23, 2021.

negotiating position, with an appeal by the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) that the continent's special circumstances be recognised in all COP workstreams.²

There are a number of key issues on the global climate agenda in which Africa has a strong stake, set out below.

Strengthened policy action and accountability

The formal outcome of COP26, the Glasgow Climate Pact, requested parties to strengthen the 2030 targets in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by the end of 2022. However, by 23 September 2022 – the COP26 submission deadline for revised NDCs – only 23 of nearly 200 countries had submitted updated plans, with the majority coming from developing countries. Of these submissions, most did not strengthen their targets, but rather added policy details to existing pledges. Of the countries that did as requested, Australia³ submitted stronger targets and Egypt quantified its emission targets for the first time. Many countries are now pushing to include major gas developments in their climate plans, which raises questions about whether the Paris Agreement targets are still achievable.⁴

A growing concern for Africa is that the NDCs that have been submitted to the UNFCCC to date do not reflect the level of ambition needed to limit escalating climate impacts on vulnerable communities. Starting in 2023, and then every five years, governments will take stock of the implementation of NDCs to assess the collective global progress made. These results will in turn inform international negotiations and clarify the level of ambition required from member countries.

In addition to NDCs, the Paris Agreement calls on countries to develop long-term, low-carbon resilient development strategies/long-term strategies (LTSs) by 2020, for economy-wide transformation towards net-zero emissions. While only four African states – Benin, South Africa, Morocco and Nigeria – have formally submitted their LTSs to the UNFCCC, many others have undertaken some form of commitment towards net-zero emissions. It is expected that momentum will build ahead of COP27 and that countries will further demonstrate Paris-compatible emission pathways and commitments, based on a differentiated albeit fair share of global effort.

Finance to enhance implementation of climate commitments

Financing is central to unlocking developing countries' enhanced mitigation and adaptation ambitions. COP27 will push for the fulfilment of historical financial promises

2 AU, "African Leaders Push for Adequate Financial and Technical Support to Address Climate Change Challenges in the Lead-Up to COP27", Press Release 000003456/2021, February 6, 2022.

3 Australia's newly elected Labour government is supporting a more ambitious climate agenda.

4 Ruth Townend, "What Is COP27?", Chatham House, August 24, 2022; Joe Lo, "Gap to 1.5C Yawns, As Most Governments Miss UN Deadline to Improve Climate Plans", *Climate Home News*, September 26, 2022.

(such as the \$100 billion annual climate financing that developed countries were meant to deliver each year from 2020-2025) that have not been met yet.

In preparation for COP27, the AGN has developed a new collective mobilisation goal on climate finance, stating that developed countries should mobilise at least \$1.3 trillion a year by 2030 to support the needs and priorities of developing countries. The group calls for 50% of this amount to go to adaptation,⁵ delivered on a grant basis and accessed through a dedicated facility. It also asks that developed countries adopt a burden-sharing arrangement, based on responsibility and capability, that ensures they commit to their fair share of climate finance contributions.⁶

Fossil fuel phase-out and the just transition

In the run-up to COP27 the AU has developed a Common Position on a Just Energy Transition. According to this proposal, it is necessary to continue deploying all energy resources, including natural gas, green and low-carbon hydrogen and nuclear energy, as short- to medium-term transition sources, while enhancing the uptake of renewables in the long term for low-carbon and climate-resilient development.⁷ While African countries are committed to a green transition, the use of transitional energy sources will ensure the continent's right to a just, albeit differentiated, path towards universal energy access, energy security and resilience.⁸ Africa currently has the world's lowest energy consumption rates and faces an increasing demand for energy. African stakeholders have argued that fossil fuels, and natural gas in particular, can ensure that citizens have access to energy while accelerating the green transition.⁹

Similarly, in May 2022 at the global Sustainable Energy for All Forum in Rwanda, 10 African countries (Kenya, Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo [DRC], Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, Senegal and Zimbabwe)¹⁰ issued the Kigali Communiqué. In this they declared their support for the use of gas as a transition fuel.

Numerous non-governmental organisations and activists have voiced their concern about this position, stressing that a focus on gas undermines the urgent need to move to renewable energy and potentially locks the continent into a fossil fuel-based future.¹¹ In addition, it may distract from other pressing issues at COP27, including climate finance

5 The latest IPCC working group stated that annual adaptation alone will cost developing countries between \$140 and \$300 billion by 2030.

6 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, "Submission by the Republic of Zambia on Behalf of the African Group of Negotiators: Views on the New Collective Mobilization Goal on Climate Finance".

7 AU, "Africa Speaks with Unified Voice as AU Executive Council Adopts African Common Position on Energy Access and Just Energy Transition", Press Release, 22 July, 2022.

8 "Africa Adopts Common Position on Just Energy Transition", *Ethiopian Monitor*, July 22, 2022.

9 AU, "African Common Position on Energy Access and Transition" (Technical Paper, Second Extraordinary Session of the Specialised Technical Committee on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructure and Energy, Addis Ababa, June 14-16, 2022).

10 Rwanda, Ministry of Infrastructure, "Kigali Communiqué: Ensuring a Just and Equitable Energy Transition in Africa – Seven Transformative Actions for SDG7".

11 Julliah Kibochi, "Outrage as African Leaders Expected to Push for Fossil Fuel Investment", *Power Shift Africa*, August 5, 2021.

for renewables and adaptation.¹² They also highlight that African countries will experience rapid population growth and urbanisation in the coming years, and that Africa's emissions are expected to double by 2050.

While Africa's carbon dioxide emissions make up only 4% of global emissions, 80% of these emissions are produced by 10 countries, namely South Africa, Egypt, Algeria, Nigeria, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Sudan, Angola and Kenya.¹³ South Africa contributes the lion share of these emissions, as one of the top-13 greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters globally.

BOX 1 SNAPSHOT OF AFRICA'S ENERGY PROFILE

Nigeria, Algeria, Angola and Libya are among the world's 20 largest producers of **oil**.

Algeria, Egypt and Nigeria are among the world's 20 largest producers of **natural gas**. Major new natural gas developments in Egypt, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania accounted for over 40% of global gas discoveries between 2011 and 2018.

Several African countries are also producers of **coal**, including Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Mauritius and Morocco also make substantial use of coal to generate power. South Africa is the world's fifth-largest coal exporter.

In 2020 Ethiopia, Angola and South Africa held Africa's largest **hydropower** capacity, followed by the DRC, Zambia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sudan, Morocco and Ghana.

South Africa and Egypt are Africa's two largest **solar power** producers, accounting for over three-quarters of installed solar capacity in 2020.

In terms of **wind energy**, South Africa, Morocco, Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia and Tunisia lead in generation, together accounting for over 95% of Africa's total wind generation capacity.

South Africa currently has the continent's only commercial **nuclear power**, while 100MW is under construction in South Sudan. Ghana, Kenya, Egypt, Morocco, Niger and Nigeria are considering adopting nuclear power and have embarked on nuclear-readiness programmes.

Sources: J William Carpenter, "The Main Oil Producing Countries in Africa", Investopedia, September 21, 2021; International Renewable Energy Agency and African Development Bank, "Renewable Energy Market Analysis: Africa and Its Regions" (IRENA and AfDB, Abu Dhabi and Abidjan, 2022).

¹² Chloé Farand, "African Climate Diplomats Reject African Union's Pro-Gas Stance for COP27", *Climate Home News*, August 4, 2022.

¹³ Statista, "Carbon Dioxide (CO2) Emissions per Capita in Africa in 2020, by Country", 2022.

Adaptation, loss and damage

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's most recent report – '[Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability](#)' – emphasises Africa's extreme and disproportionate vulnerability to climate impacts.¹⁴ Making progress on adaptation, as well as loss and damage,¹⁵ is therefore a key aspect of the AGN's negotiating agenda.

In an attempt to alter the mitigation focus of previous climate summits, COP26 tried to enhance the impetus given to climate adaptation and resilience building. It emphasised these themes in the [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) and urged developed countries to at least double adaptation financing. Glasgow also saw the launch of a two-year work programme on a [global goal on adaptation](#).¹⁶

Despite resistance from some developed countries, COP26 led to the establishment of the three-year Glasgow Dialogue on Loss and Damage. At COP27, Africa, along with its developing-country counterparts in the G77 and China, wants to see some progress on operationalising the Santiago Network. The Santiago Network was established in 2019 to link vulnerable developing countries with providers of the technical assistance, resources and knowledge needed to mitigate and address *loss and damage*.¹⁷ In addition, developing countries are calling for the establishment of a dedicated funding arrangement for loss and damage.¹⁸

While a global agreement on climate action is key, the onus rests on countries to drive these agendas domestically

The loss-and-damage agenda is highly relevant to African countries. Kenya, for example, has included detailed provisions on preventing loss and damage, coupled with adaptation, in its NDC.¹⁹ It calls on the international community to fund locally led climate actions to support communities, enhance the uptake of adaptation technology, improve the incorporation of indigenous knowledge and mobilise investment in the blue economy.²⁰

14 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, [IPCC Sixth Assessment Report](#) (Geneva: IPCC, February 28, 2022).

15 Loss and damage refer to the destructive impacts of climate change that cannot be avoided by either mitigation or adaptation. For more on loss and damage, see Andrew Gilder and Olivia Rumble, "[An African Perspective on Loss and Damage](#)" (Policy Insight 130, South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, 2022).

16 The GGA seeks to help countries to adapt, increase resilience to climate change and reduce their vulnerability through, and complementary with, sustainable development.

17 UNFCCC, "[About the Santiago Network](#)".

18 UNFCCC, "[Co-Chairs' Summary of the Informal Multilateral Consultations with Group Chairs and HODs by the COP 26 Presidency and the COP 27 incoming Presidency on Loss and Damage](#)", 14 July, 2022.

19 Gilder and Rumble, "An African Perspective on Loss".

20 Food and Agriculture Organization, "[Kenya's Updated Nationally determined Contributed \(NDC\) 2020-2030](#)", June 9, 2022.

Progressive African climate champions

While a global agreement on climate action is key, the onus rests on countries to drive these agendas domestically. As such, African-led climate action is in the spotlight in the run-up to COP27.

BOX 2 KEY AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO WATCH AT COP27

Senegal has considerable political weight in climate negotiations. It is the chairperson of the AU and the Least Developed Countries Group,^a and the president of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, which provides guidance on preparing a common position for Africa.

Kenya is active on multiple climate agendas. It is also the chair of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change, providing political leadership to the Africa Group in climate negotiations and spearheading a common position. In addition, it is an African member of the UN Security Council, along with Niger and Tunisia.

Rwanda has longstanding government engagement on climate and environmental issues. It was the first country in Africa to update its NDC. Submitted in May 2020, the revised NDC provides extensive details on quantified mitigation and adaptation targets. It also gives a detailed breakdown of the funding needed to cover its climate priorities.^b

Benin, South Africa, Morocco and **Nigeria** have formally submitted their LTSs to the UNFCCC.

Gabon is a champion of the forestry agenda and a pioneer of the REDD+ programme. It is also the first African country to receive results-based payments for reducing carbon emissions. Gabon has put \$5 billion of carbon credits on the market in an attempt to monetise carbon sequestration.

DRC and **Liberia** were among the African countries that specifically called for the inclusion of nature-based solutions in the final Glasgow COP26 text.

South Africa has called for international green finance to help with the domestic transition of its energy sector, and public utility Eskom, from fossil fuels to renewable energies. At COP26, international partners pledged ZAR^c 131 billion (\$8.5 billion) to South Africa over three to five years. In addition, it is leading discussions on the advancement of the Just Energy Transition agenda through its Presidential Climate Change Commission.

Malawi's president regularly speaks on international platforms about the urgency of climate change adaptation, calling on developed countries to step up their commitments. It is the current chair of SADC. At COP26, **Nigeria, Malawi** and **Rwanda** called for additional climate finance to support Africa's commitments on landscape restoration.

Zambia is currently presiding over the AGN and is thus leading on the technical tier of negotiations for Africa. It will play a lead role in preparing the negotiation text and group positions for endorsement at COP27.

Seychelles plays an active role in promoting the oceans agenda. It is currently the AU chair of the African Islands Climate Commission and a vocal member of the Small Island Developing States coalition.

Ethiopia has been leading on the restoration agenda, with large public tree planting and restoration campaigns at the country level. It has included ambitious restoration goals for forests and land ecosystems in its NDC.

Zambia, Malawi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Senegal and **Zimbabwe**, among others, are pushing for a new mandate for the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture that includes an integrated food system approach, with food security at its core.

Algeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria and **the Republic of Congo** are members of OPEC and have large oil, gas and coal reserves. These countries are pushing for a just transition that includes compensation for a transition away from fossil fuels. They also want to be allowed to continue to use their hydrocarbon reserves without penalisation.

Nigeria has developed an ambitious national climate policy. It passed its climate bill in 2021 and announced a 2060 net-zero emissions target. It has also initiated its Energy Transition Plan with a view to garner financial support at COP27.

- a The priority issues for the Least Developed Countries Group include climate justice and compensation, finance, adaptation and support to address loss and damage.
- b The total estimated cost of Rwanda's identified NDC mitigation and adaptation measures to 2030 is \$11 billion, with conditional accounting for around 60% and unconditional accounting for around 40% of the total estimated funding requirements.
- c Currency code for the South African rand.

In addition to enhanced actions by member countries, there is a call for multilateral institutions such as the AU to become a stronger voice in Africa's climate diplomacy. In February 2022 the AU Heads of State and Government adopted the [AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan \(2022-2032\)](#). This is a common framework around which Africa can pursue its collective climate change and resilient development agenda. It is a significant achievement for the continent, laying the foundation for joint climate action and providing a platform to develop partnerships and rally support. At COP27, the AU Climate Change Strategy will be a crucial resource for negotiators and other key stakeholders in identifying Africa's concrete collective priorities and needs.

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COP27 is set in a difficult geopolitical landscape

There is hope that turbulent geopolitics will not halt progress on the COP27 agenda and result in a fractious summit. China suspended climate change cooperation with the US in August 2022 in protest at US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan. Analysts suspect that this may signal the end of bilateral discussions between US and Chinese climate envoys prior to COP27, and perhaps result in less visible or diluted collaboration at the summit,²¹ including around plans to launch a joint climate working group.

On the other hand, renewed economic competition between the US and China, the world's two superpowers and largest GHG emitters, might result in added momentum towards clean energy transformation.²² China is continuing with its efforts to ensure that it retains its strategic position in the supply chain for electric vehicles, batteries, solar panels and other green technologies. The US, meanwhile, signed into law the historic [Inflation Reduction Act](#) in August 2022, looking to bolster clean-energy production by encouraging companies to produce more renewable energy and households to transform their energy use and consumption.²³ The act allocates \$369 billion to build a domestic clean-tech manufacturing sector and advance the supply of critical equipment for solar, wind and batteries.

21 At COP26, China and the US issued a joint climate pledge that included an agreement to reduce methane gas emissions. Since then, the US has been in closed talks with Beijing, hoping to influence it to raise its climate ambitions through appeals based on mutual responsibility.

22 Karl Mathiesen and Zack Colman, "Newest Cause for Climate Optimism? The US Rivalry with China", *Politico*, August 20, 2022.

23 Amy Wang, "Biden Signs Democrats' Sweeping Bill to Tackle Climate Change, Lower Health-Care Costs", *The Washington Post*, August 16, 2022.

COP27 is also set to take place against the backdrop of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has heightened geopolitical tensions and increased competition for fossil fuels amid skyrocketing commodity prices. At the G7 Summit in June 2022, the group confirmed its commitment to decarbonising electricity supply by 2035. However, it also focused on what was needed to reduce reliance on Russian energy without compromising the goal of 'climate neutrality'. In the G7 Leaders' Communiqué of 28 June 2022, the group confirmed the end of international public financing of fossil fuels, with the exception of liquefied natural gas (LNG).²⁴ It stated, 'Given the exceptional circumstances, LNG will continue to play an important role in a move away from Russian oil and coal. Investment in the gas sector is therefore an acceptable temporary solution.'²⁵ This decision has seen a strong backlash, with critics calling it a 'watered-down' version of the COP26 commitment to end direct public support for fossil fuels by 2022.

The EU too is looking to reinforce cooperation on LNG and green hydrogen supplies, and to develop the Mediterranean Green Hydrogen Partnership, encompassing hydrogen trade between Europe, Africa and the Gulf. In fact, in July 2022 the EU Parliament voted in favour of including gas and nuclear in its green transition framework, with their inclusion in the taxonomy regulation promoting access to private sustainable finance.²⁶

Conclusion

A successful outcome will rely heavily on the goodwill between all parties and the leadership of Africa's member countries

COP27 is of paramount importance in the attempts to achieve ambitious global climate action. Lack of action will have dire consequences for Africa, other developing regions and the world more broadly. Despite complex global geopolitical dynamics, climate action and especially policy implementation must remain high on the political agenda of all countries to minimise the gap between current pledges and what is needed to avoid devastating climate change in Africa. A successful outcome will rely heavily on the goodwill between all parties and the leadership of Africa's member countries, with an African country hosting COP27 and the continent one of the largest negotiating constituencies.

24 G7 Germany, "G7 Summit at Schloss Elmau: The Outcomes at a Glance", June 28, 2022.

25 G7 Germany, "G7 Leaders' Communiqué", June 28, 2022.

26 Henry Edwardes-Evans, "EU Parliament Votes in Favor of Gas, Nuclear Inclusion in Sustainable Finance Taxonomy", S&P Global Commodity Insights, July 6, 2022.

African negotiators will play a key role in ensuring progress on agendas that are aligned with Africa's development needs and interests, including outcomes on loss and damage, adaptation, climate finance and a just transition

African countries now have a common vision for climate action in the shape of the continental strategy. This gives the continent the opportunity to join forces to ensure any engagement at COP27 represents its broader interests and supports its goals to build low-carbon, climate-resilient and sustainable societies. African negotiators will play a key role in ensuring progress on agendas that are aligned with Africa's development needs and interests, including outcomes on loss and damage, adaptation, climate finance and a just transition.

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SAIIA's policy insights are situation analysis papers intended for policymakers, whether in government or business. They are designed to bridge the space between policy briefings and occasional papers.

Cover image

Hundreds of climate activists protested in the Democratic Republic of Congo's capital Kinshasa on September 23, 2022 ahead of a climate summit due to be held in the next month (Arsene Mpiana/AFP via Getty Images)

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