

# Strengthening Climate Resilience in Africa's Marine and Coastal Zones Through Ecosystem-Based Adaptation (EbA)

## COP27 CALL-TO-ACTION

### ABOUT THIS PROJECT STATEMENT

The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) has produced this project statement as a key component of the project Marine and Coastal Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) in the National Climate Responses of Coastal and Island Countries in Southern Africa, overseen by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat and implemented through Global Climate Change Alliance Plus funding programme.

This statement draws on the preliminary research and deliberations conducted through the SADC Community of Practice on Marine and Coastal EbA, which has been established through this project.

### CONTEXT

- Ocean ecosystems are increasingly impacted by climate change through more severe tropical storms, sea level rise and a number of other drivers. Yet, where marine and coastal ecosystems are protected and restored, they can also help communities adapt to climate change impacts.
- Ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) is the use of biodiversity and ecosystem services to help people adapt to the adverse effects of climate change. EbA involves governing and managing ecosystems to enhance their resilience to climate shocks and stresses – maintaining, and where possible, improving the quality and quantity of ecosystem goods and services they provide to society – and thus supporting the ability of communities to adapt to current and future climate risks.
- Despite their value, marine and coastal ecosystems are being degraded at a rapid rate and are currently under severe threat and pressure.
- Coastal and island African countries are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as their communities are reliant on marine and coastal ecosystems to support their economies and the livelihoods of their people.
- Besides climate adaptation, EbA contributes to achieving more sustainable forms of development, as well as strengthening job and livelihoods opportunities.

### KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on this, we encourage African negotiators and stakeholders at COP27 to support action on the following eight key recommendations:

1. Strengthen the inclusion of EbA in Nationally Determined Contributions, other national and sectoral climate policies, blue economy frameworks, and disaster risk reduction strategies.
2. Advocate for innovative financing mechanisms to scale coastal and marine EbA, including public-private partnerships.
3. Enhance the governance of EbA, with a focus on participatory, adaptive, community-led governance.
4. Enhance opportunities for local stakeholders to co-design and secure benefit from EbA initiatives, including marginalised groups such as women and youth.
5. Strengthen the contribution of nature-based solutions to sustainable urban development in African coastal cities.
6. Promote EbA projects and coastal livelihood interventions that create job and livelihood opportunities.
7. Initiate new partnerships, regional cooperation and peer learning forums to support the uptake of EbA in policy and practice.
8. Continue to promote the important interlinkages between oceans and climate change, as prioritised through the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan.

To strengthen climate resilience in Southern Africa's marine and coastal zones, the EbA Community of Practice requests policy makers to support these recommendations and to use their positions and influence to amplify these key messages at COP27, and beyond.