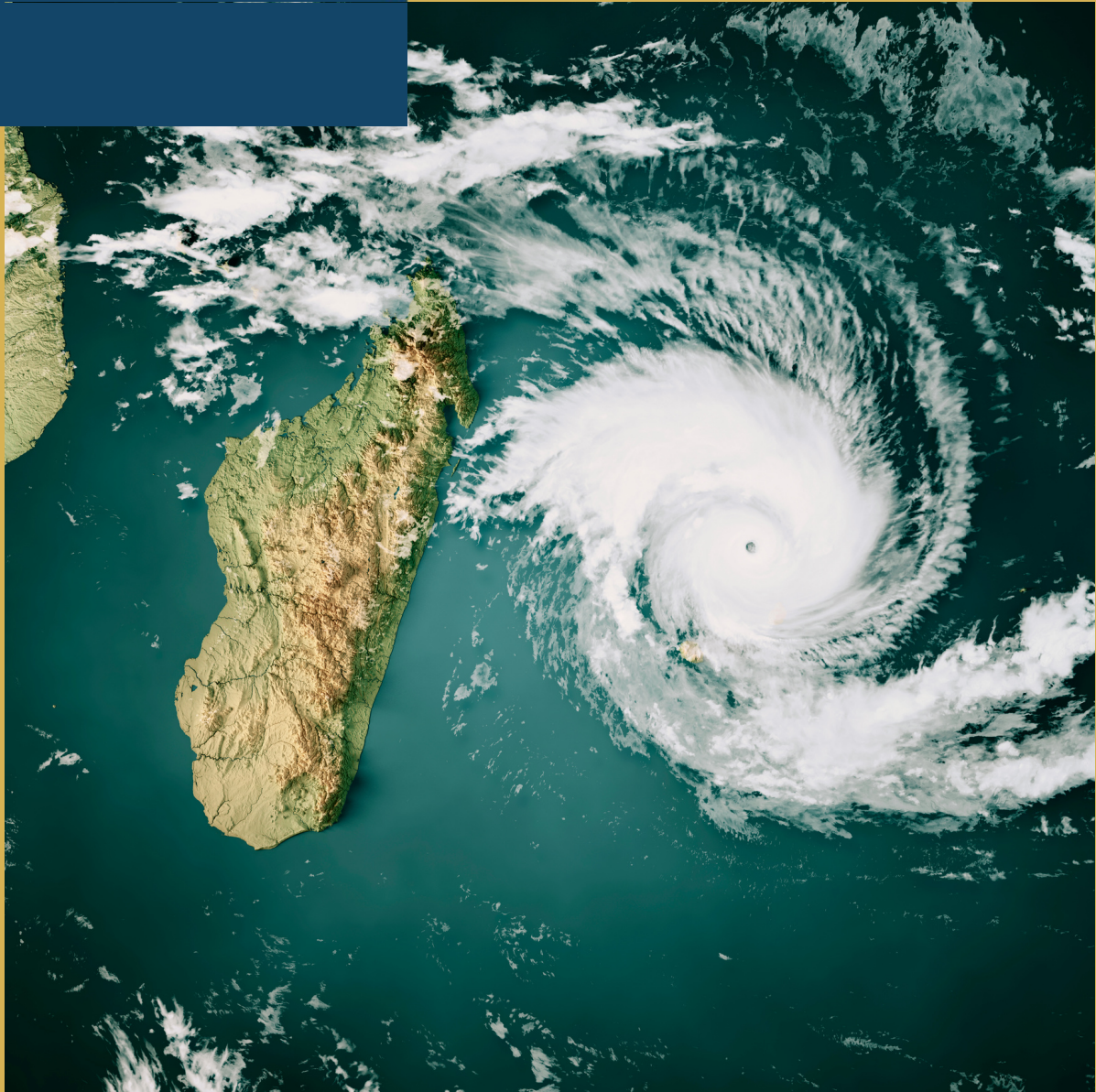


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Africa's Climate Champions: Key countries to watch at COP28

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Introduction

Between 30 November and 12 December 2023, the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UN Framework Convention (UNFCCC) will take place in Dubai to address the multiple and escalating climate challenges facing the world. Africa, through its recently developed [Nairobi Declaration](#), has clearly articulated its wishes and desires for a successful and equitable COP28 for Africa. The Declaration builds on the African Union's (AU) [Climate Change and Resilient Strategy and Action Plan \(2022-2032\)](#), which provides an important platform for the continent to develop partnerships around its key climate priorities.

However, if COP28 is to deliver on these expectations, African countries and coalitions must drive the regional climate agenda, both domestically and internationally. This report highlights the climate leadership role that specific African countries are playing, both within their own domestic contexts, but also on the continental and international front. Africa's global influence is growing, providing its leaders with additional avenues to raise the continent's climate concerns. For example, the AU is now a full member of the G20. The BRICS grouping has also expanded, with two African states, Egypt and Ethiopia, among the new BRICS+ members. Morocco hosted the recent World Bank and International Monetary Fund annual meeting, where the institutions announced a seat for Africa on their respective boards.

A number of African negotiating structures work to support the continent's climate priorities. This includes the Africa Group of Negotiators (AGN), the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN), the Committee of African Heads of State on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), as well as the AU regional Climate Commissions. The positions of countries chairing these structures must be considered. It is also important to take note of the membership blocs which Africa forms part of, as these will be used to promote technical and thematic issues within the negotiations. This includes, among others, the G77 and China; the Alliance of Small Island Developing States (SIDS); the Coalition of Rainforest nations; the Climate Vulnerable Forum; BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China); the Least Developed Countries negotiating forum; the Like-Minded Group of Developing Countries; and OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries).

This document seeks to outline some of the key African countries to watch at COP28, including African institutions and negotiating blocs, as well as broader blocs that have a significant African membership. While acknowledging that significant climate action is being taken by a wide range of actors across the continent, including cities, NGOs, think tanks, youth groups and business, the analysis here is largely restricted to individual countries, international institutions and multilateral negotiating blocs.

Africa's climate change negotiating structures

The Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change

The CAHOSCC provides political leadership and guidance in climate negotiations and spearheads a common African position. The committee meets on the margins of the AU Assembly and at other high-

level events. The coordination of the CAHOSCC rotates every two years. President Ruto from Kenya currently chairs the committee. There are 14 permanent members.¹

The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

Established in December 1985, AMCEN provides political guidance to the negotiations in preparation of the African common position and makes decisions at the AMCEN Conference, which is convened every two years. The Presidency rotates every two years among the continental regions. Senegal is the current chair of AMCEN, with Ethiopia assuming the chair in 2024. The [Addis Ababa Declaration](#), stemming from the most recent AMCEN meeting in August 2023, encourages African governments to prioritise climate action to address its environmental challenges and expressed support for implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The African Group of Negotiators

The AGN plays a significant technical role in climate negotiations, representing the voices of all AU member countries. It engages in all COP meetings and intersessional negotiations and prepares the negotiation text and group positions for endorsement and adoption by ministers during the COPs. The African Group emphasises the 'special circumstances' of African countries and it is active in requesting adequate financial support to reduce the continent's vulnerabilities and transition to low emission, climate resilient pathways. The AGN has also actively called for the finalisation and operationalisation of the Global Goal on Adaptation, as well as calling for early and significant pledges to the Loss and Damage Fund, among other key priorities identified in the Nairobi Declaration. The AGN plays an important role in the G77 and China grouping, as well as in influencing the negotiations in general, with significant voting power as a bloc. The chairing of AGN covers a two-year period and rotates between the African sub-regions. The current chair of the AGN is Zambian, Ephraim Mwepya Shitima (2022-2023) who has an important role to play in steering the Africa Group and ensuring coherence on issues of equity and justice for Africa, and especially for Least Developed Countries and SIDS.²

AU Regional Climate Commissions

At COP22 in Marrakech in 2016, Morocco supported the creation of three regional Climate Commissions covering the Sahel region, the Island states and the Congo Basin. The regional commissions are intended to harmonise climate action on the continent, in line with the AU's climate policies. The Sahel Commission, for example, chaired by Niger, highlights that the region is the most exposed and vulnerable

¹ Committee members include the Presidents of Algeria, Congo Republic, Egypt, Kenya (currently the chair), Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and the country representing the African Group of Negotiators (currently the President of Zambia), the Prime Ministers of Ethiopia and Mauritius, the Chairperson of the AU (currently the President of the Union of Comoros) and the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mr Moussa Faki.

² Previous AGN chairs included, Mr. Tanguy Gahouma, Gabon (2020/2021), Ambassador Mohamed Nasr, Egypt (2018/2019), Ambassador Hussein Alfa Nafo, Mali (2016 /2017), Mr. Nagmeldin Goutbi Elhassan, Republic of Sudan (2014/2015), Mr. Emmanuel Dlamini, Swaziland (2012/2013), Mr. Tosi Mpanu-Mpanu, Democratic Republic of Congo (2010/2011).

to climate change and aims to encourage cooperation among member states to preserve and restore the ecosystems of the Sahel and promote sustainable development. The Sahel Commission agreed in February 2023 for Nigeria to host the Secretariat for the Sahel Climate Fund, which will mobilise resources to implement sustainable development and climate programmes across the region. The Republic of Congo is the chair of the Congo Basin Climate Commission, which seeks to accelerate the economic transformation of the Congo Basin and make progress in the implementation of a sustainable climate transition. A key initiative in this region is the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin, which aims to collect resources to finance programmes and projects in the areas of the green economy and blue economy. Seychelles is the chair of the Africa Island States Climate Commission, which advocates for unified action to address climate change and biodiversity challenges for Africa's Island states as part of efforts to promote climate resilient sustainable development.³

Regional Economic Communities

Regional bodies like Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and East Africa's Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD) are also driving climate action on the continent. ECOWAS, made up of 15 countries, developed a [Regional Climate Strategy and Action Plan](#) in 2022 that outlines long-term climate action for the region to 2030 and 2050. Among the grouping's key priorities are mitigating climate vulnerability, carbon credits, climate financing, adaptation, loss and damage, transparency and technology transfer. SADC, which is comprised of 16 member states, has developed a number of policies to guide the region's response to climate change, the [Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan \(RISDP 2020 - 2030\)](#); in its [SADC Vision 2050](#), as well as in its Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2020-2030). SADC developed its own regional Great Green Wall Initiative, building off the AU's flagship project and intends to mobilise \$27 billion by 2025 to support implementation of this initiative. The subregion is a key player in critical minerals and has begun exploring the potential for industrialisation of these critical minerals through the implementation of the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063 and the recent implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.⁴ IGAD is a group of eight countries in the Horn of Africa that promotes peace and development, with key risks including drought, food insecurity and the displacement of people. In 2020, IGAD adopted the [Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD Region](#), specifically referring to people fleeing from climate disasters. IGAD has also made strides to increase disaster risk preparedness in the region through the IGAD [Climate Prediction and Applications Centre](#) and the IGAD Regional Climate Security Coordination Mechanism. The bloc is also in the processes of validating its first Climate Adaptation Strategy, which will be launched at COP28.

³ Seychelles Nation, '[African Island States Commission launched](#)' February 11, 2020.

⁴ Cloete et al, "[Systemic Innovations for Critical Minerals in SADC: Draft Strategic Framework](#)", (Special Report 4: Futures Critical Minerals, South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, 2023)

African countries

Cabo Verde is the chair of the African Caucus of Governors of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, where it has been vocal on the need for more equitable access to climate finance.⁵ This is a forum that represents the views of Africa's finance ministers and central bank governors. In January 2023, Portugal and Cabo Verde entered into a 'debt-for-nature' agreement.⁶ Under this agreement, \$12 million of Cabo Verde's debt repayments to Portugal will be placed into an environmental fund for Cabo Verde to use for energy and climate projects.

President Azali Assoumani of the **Union of Comoros** is currently chairing the AU (with the next chair likely to come from North Africa). In his capacity as the AU chair, President Assoumani attended the G20 Summit in September 2023, where the AU was invited to be a member organisation of grouping. The G20 holds significant weight in COP negotiations, with climate and energy being central thematic areas of interest for members. Comoros is also a member of Africa Island States Climate Commission, advocating for the needs of SIDS in Africa. From 12-14 June 2023, the Government of Comoros hosted the Blue Future Ministerial Conference where the [Moroni Declaration for Ocean and Climate Action in Africa](#) was adopted. This Declaration advocates for ocean conservation in Africa, with a focus on the needs of coastal communities for enhanced resilient development. Support for COP-related ocean initiatives, such as the Great Blue Wall, are advocated for in the Nairobi Declaration, as is the need to scale nature-based solutions to tackle ocean-related climate challenges.

Ethiopia's Green Legacy Initiative promotes large-scale national restoration through public tree planting campaigns. From 2019-2022, Ethiopia created over 767 000 green jobs through these reforestation and afforestation programmes. Ethiopia is the current Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and in 2024, it will take over the chair of AMCEN from Senegal.

Gabon is an advocate for the forestry agenda and a pioneer of the 'Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries' ([REDD+](#)) programme.⁷ Gabon, Ghana and Mozambique are currently non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Within the UN Security Council agenda, Gabon is driving the inclusion of the climate-security nexus as a key priority.⁸ Gabon chairs the [Africa Adaptation Initiative](#), whose creation was spearheaded by AMCEN and the AGN in 2015. The Africa Adaptation Initiative aims to strengthen collaboration on adaptation through high-level pan-African and regional dialogues, adaptation action and seeks to address the adaptation financing gap.

Ghana is the chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum and recently made a strong call at the 58th Session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies meeting in Bonn for concrete financial pledges towards the Loss and Damage Fund, specifically requesting the major carbon emitters within the G7 and G20 to ensure their

⁵ Geraldine Boechat, '[Cape Verde points to climate resilience as biggest challenge for small island states](#)' *MedAfrica*, August 25, 2023.

⁶ Sergio Goncalves, '[Portugal agrees to swap Cape Verde's debt for environmental investment](#)' *Reuters*, January 23, 2023

⁷ The REDD+ programme falls under the UN Development Programme and is a framework to encourage developing countries to reduce emissions and enhance removals of greenhouse gases through forest management.

⁸ Adam Day, Janani Vivekananda, and Grazia Pacillo, '[Climate Change in the Security Council: What new council members can achieve in 2023](#)', *Relief Web*, January 30, 2023.

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) reflect their 'fair-share' to address climate change.⁹ Ghana will also present a 'Climate Prosperity Plan' at COP28, which aligns its national development goals with climate-smart strategies.

Kenya's President William Ruto is the current Chair of the CAHOSCC.¹⁰ Kenya hosted the first [Africa Climate Summit](#) in September 2023 where the [Nairobi Declaration](#) was adopted. Kenya was also invited to join the [Global Centre on Adaptation \(GCA\) Advisory Board](#) to mobilise the adaptation finance requests stemming for the Nairobi Declaration. Kenya will host the new regional headquarters for GCA in Nairobi, expected to open in January 2025.¹¹ Ruto has played a crucial role in the implementation of the GCA's [Africa Adaptation Acceleration Programme](#) and is leading in the development of a national adaptation investment roadmap to outline its key priorities, needs and mobilization strategies for implementing its climate adaptation measures. Ruto has presided over the launch of the [Green Hydrogen Strategy and Roadmap for Kenya](#), setting out Kenya's ambitions in this area to 2032, with a focus on domestic market development and job creation. President Ruto is also a keen supporter of carbon markets, arguing that Africa's carbon sinks are an 'unparalleled economic goldmine' for the continent.¹²

Malawi co-hosted the third [Climate and Development Ministerial](#) on 29 October 2023, which was led by the Least Developed Countries and Alliance of Small Island States,¹³ with a key focus on adaptation finance. The aim of the Ministerial meetings is to ensure that the concerns of the most climate-vulnerable nations are heard by convening countries and key financial institutions. Malawi has shown strong support for operationalising the Loss and Damage Fund at COP28.

Morocco hosted the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's annual meeting in October 2023, marking the first African country to host such a meeting in over 50 years. The EU and Morocco signed a Green Partnership deal ahead of COP27 in 2022, which will support Morocco's growing renewable energy and electric mobility industries.¹⁴ In September 2023, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a 19-month arrangement for Morocco under the recently established Resilience and Sustainability Facility to an amount of \$1.32 billion, while also expanding the country's renewable energy supply. The country is also becoming a leader in green hydrogen development, specifically looking to supply European countries facing major energy shortages because of the Russia-Ukraine war. Approximately 6 000 square kilometres have been allocated to green hydrogen infrastructure development, and the government has recently developed a [National Hydrogen Strategy](#).¹⁵ Morocco plays a key role in the Climate Commission for the Sahel Region and in the development of its Climate

⁹ Climate Vulnerable Forum, *Ghana CVF Presidency Statement for the Opening Plenary*, June 5, 2023 <https://thecvf.org/our-voice/statements/chair/ghana-cvf-presidency-statement-for-the-opening-plenary-of-the-58th-session-of-the-unfccc-subsidiary-bodies/>

¹⁰ Relief Web, ['Kenya Moots Disbanding the Loss and Damage Fund, Seeks Fair Equitable Climate Action'](#), June 7, 2023.

¹¹ Global Centre on Adaptation, ['William Ruto President of Kenya joins GCA Advisory Board'](#), September 29, 2023.

¹² France 24, ['Kenya bets on carbon credits as it hosts African Climate Summit'](#), September 5, 2023

¹³ Seychelles, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritius, São Tomé and Príncipe are all members of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) which is comprised of 40 low-lying Small Island Developing States (SIDS) that are vulnerable to sea-level rise and weather extremes.

¹⁴ Directorate-General for Climate Action, ['The EU and Morocco launch the first Green Partnership on energy, climate and the environment ahead of COP27'](#), *European Commission*, October 18, 2022.

¹⁵ Arab News, ['Morocco aims to become key player in green hydrogen'](#) September 23, 2023.

Investment Plan.¹⁶ Morocco also chairs the AU's [Initiative for the Adaptation of African Agriculture](#), which aims to reduce the vulnerability of Africa's agricultural sector to climate change.

Mozambique has been elected to the UN Security Council, co-chairing the Informal Expert Group on Climate Security with the United Arab Emirates and Switzerland. The Mayor of Quelimane, Manuel de Araújo, is making significant progress on equipping communities against the onset of climate disasters. Each neighbourhood has an emergency management and risk reduction committee. Through the US Agency for International Development City Adaptation Project, the city has been restoring mangroves since 2015, while educating local communities about their importance in disaster risk reduction. While the city suffered major damages from the onset of Cyclone Idai in 2019, de Araújo commended the work of the City Adaptation Project noting that 'the day we don't have mangroves, I don't think our city will survive'.¹⁷ Many other mayors are also actively pushing for ambitious climate action in cities, reflected in the 2023 [Mayors' Call to Action](#).

Namibia has emerged as a source of critical minerals that are essential to the development of renewable energy technologies. For example, the country has a heavy rare earths operation that produces 2000 tonnes per year and has rich deposits of some of the most valuable rare earth metals including dysprosium and terbium.¹⁸ The Namibian government has expressed its interest in domestically processing its noteworthy reserves of rare earths to accelerate mining investment in the country. Namibia is one of several African countries with significant reserves of critical minerals, which is an issue of increasing geostrategic importance in the context of the energy transition.

Nigeria has committed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060, estimated to cost about \$1.9 trillion in the next 60 years. To support this ambition, it has developed an Energy Transition Plan with a view to garner financial support. It has also passed its Climate Change Act 2021; set up an Energy Transition Implementation working group; and implemented economic reforms such as the removal of the country's fuel subsidy.¹⁹ Nigeria is very active in just transition dialogues and negotiations as it is currently the fourth largest emitter of CO₂ emissions on the continent. In 2019, Nigeria joined the Global Methane Alliance, committing to reducing methane reduction targets of at least 45% by 2025 and 60-70% reduction by 2030. The country will also host the financing arm of the Sahel Region Climate Commission, namely the Sahel Climate Fund. Nigerian President Bola Tinubu is the new chairperson for the ECOWAS. At the UN General Assembly, President Tinubu highlighted Africa's vulnerability to climate change and emphasized the effort Nigeria would make to halt desertification in the northern region and encroaching floods in the South.²⁰ Nigeria currently holds the Presidency of the Pan African Agency for the Great Green Wall Initiative, where it actively pushes regional land restoration efforts among the partner countries.

¹⁶ Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, '[His Majesty King Mohammed VI addressed a message to the participants in the 2nd Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Climate Commission for the Sahel Region](#).' February 17, 2023.

¹⁷ Gregory Scruggs, '[The day we don't have mangroves, our city won't survive': Quelimane, Mozambique, after Cyclone Idai](#)', February 13, 2020

¹⁸ Gracelin Baskaran, '[Prospects for US Minerals Engagement with Africa](#)', Centre for Strategic and International Studies, August 29, 2023

¹⁹ Gregoire Sauvage, '[A necessary 'sacrifice': Nigeria ends almost 50 years of fuel subsidies](#)', *France24*, June 12, 2023.

²⁰ VOA Africa, '[President of Nigeria Bola Ahmed Tinubu Addresses 78th UNGA](#)' September 20, 2023

The **Republic of Congo** is the chair of the Congo Basin Climate Commission, which hosted the Summit of the Three Basins in Brazzaville (26 -28 October 2023). The Summit aims to restore 350 million hectares of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems under the framework of the UN's Decade for Ecosystem Restoration. At the Summit, leaders from the respective countries of the three basins adopted a 13-point [joint declaration](#) with seven formal commitments, including the encouragement of 'financial mobilisation and the development of traditional and innovative financing mechanisms.'²¹ The use of carbon markets, however, was not formally included in the final text. The Declaration called on developed countries to deliver on their climate financing commitments, including the mobilisation of \$200 billion per year for biodiversity action by 2030.²² The inclusion of Indigenous peoples, local communities and youth in forest restoration was also recognised, and a roadmap for the implementation of the EU-Congo [Forest Partnership](#) was adopted. While the Summit managed to develop a common position ahead of COP28, specifically regarding the inclusion of nature-based solutions in formal outcome documents, it failed to deliver the formalisation of a tri-basin alliance.

Rwanda has received regular invitations to attend the G20 Summits (2018, 2020, 2021, 2022). At the Paris Summit for a New Financing Global Pact, Rwanda secured a partnership deal with the IMF, the European Investment Bank and several other partners, to mobilise EUR 300 million through the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Trust. At COP27, Rwandan President Paul Kagame announced the launch of a national investment facility, Ireme Invest, financed through the Rwanda Green Fund and the Development Bank of Rwanda, aimed at mobilising private sector green investment. Rwanda was the first African country to submit an updated NDC in 2020 and has been extremely committed to national forest restoration initiatives, achieving its goal of increasing forest cover to 30% of all land area in 2019. In this regard, the country has shown leadership under the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative. In June 2022, Rwanda hosted the Commonwealth Heads of State meeting where a [Communiqué](#), a [Call to Action on Living Lands](#), and a [Declaration on Sustainable Urbanisation](#) were adopted.

Senegal is the chairperson of the AU and the Least Developed Countries Group, and the president of the AMCEN which provides guidance on preparing a common position for Africa. Senegal has also been invited to the G20 Summit several times between 2014 and 2020. Senegal's recent Just Energy Transition Partnership²³ was announced at the Paris Financing Summit. Senegal will receive an initial \$2.74 billion from the International Partners Group (France, Germany, the UK, Canada, and the European Union) to develop renewable energy and speed up its transition to a low-carbon economy.²⁴

Seychelles plays an active role in promoting the ocean-climate agenda. It is currently the chair of the Africa Island States Climate Commission, and it hosted the first technical and expert meeting of the group in May 2023. The meeting sought to make some progress on establishing a governance framework for the commission and promote action on priorities emerging from COP27. Seychelles also plays a

²¹ Amazonia/Congo/Borneo-Mekong and Southeast Asia, Summit of the Three Basins of Biodiversity Ecosystems and Tropical Forests, [Joint Declaration from the Second Summit of the Three Basins](#), Brazzaville, October 26-28, 2023.

²² Carbon Brief, ['Q&A: What the 'underwhelming Three Basins Summit means for tropical forests'](#), November 1, 2023

²³ Sarah Mcfarlane, ['African Union Chairman Macky Sall to attend G20 Summit – Officials'](#), *Reuters*, September 11, 2022

²⁴ International Partners Group, ['Just Energy Transition Partnership with Senegal'](#) June 22, 2023.

leading role for the AU's SIDS and hosted the second meeting of the Platform of African Union Small Island Developing States in February 2023.²⁵

South Africa is a member of the G20 and is the 2023 chair of the BRICS group, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg in August 2023, under the theme 'BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism'. The just energy transition debate featured prominently on the agenda, with all the BRICS nations acknowledging the urgency of decarbonisation in the Summit's [Johannesburg II Declaration](#). South Africa serves as the lead negotiator for a just energy transition for the G77 and China grouping, which seeks a multilateral platform to discuss both the international and national aspects of diverse just transition pathways. South Africa is also leading elements of the Global Stocktake negotiations at COP28 and is a strong advocate for global financial institutional reform, particularly the delivery of a new suite of financing and debt-relief instruments, with favourable terms and conditions for developing countries generally and Africa specifically. Since COP26, South Africa has been vocal about the need for a Global Goal on Adaptation that will help to prescribe quantifiable adaptation targets and indicators for building climate resilience. South Africa has called for increasing the climate resilience of the global population by 50% by 2030 and 90% by 2050, arguing that these targets will support vulnerable and developing countries who lack the resources to build resilience.²⁶ In her speech at the Africa Climate Summit, Minister Creecy called for 'the deployment of new financial instruments, particularly non-debt instruments, policy-based guarantees and options that do not require sovereign guarantees'.²⁷ These instruments, she said, should focus on the economic costs of transition risk by taking first loss risks on investments in technologies that are not yet commercially available. In addition, she called on approaches that help bridge the gap to commercial project viability, mitigate risks, finance first-of-its-kind projects and support technical assistance work. In October 2023, South Africa's Climate Change Bill was passed through the National Assembly, enabling the alignment of policies that influence South Africa's climate change response. South Africa is the largest greenhouse gas emitter on the continent, ranking 14th globally in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and 12th globally in terms of CO₂ emissions. South Africa is also a member of the [Global Biofuels Alliance](#), launched on 9 September by India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. There has been a strong focus on the just transition in South Africa, particularly following the announcement of South Africa as the first beneficiary of a Just Energy Transition Partnership agreement at COP26. South Africa presented a Just Energy Transition Investment Plan, outlining financing needs and priority investments, at COP27.

Uganda chairs the G77 and China group for 2024, where it is expected to raise issues related to climate finance, peace and security.²⁸ Uganda will also chair the Non-Aligned Movement in 2024, which called for an equitable international global order at the [Summit of the Group of 77 and China](#) held in Havana, Cuba in September 2023. Uganda has developed an innovative monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV) tool to measure the mitigation and adaptation efforts of its updated NDC. The tool tracks the national Greenhouse Gases (GHG) inventory and streamlines data collection by reporting actions across

²⁵ African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources, '[Seychelles to host 2nd Meeting of the Platform of Small Island Developing States \(SIDS\) and an Expert Consultative Training Workshop on Negotiation Skills](#)', February 20, 2023

²⁶ Climate Home News, '[South Africa proposes global goal for adaptation at pre-COP26 ministerial](#)', July 27, 2021.

²⁷ Government of South Africa, '[Minister Barbara Creecy: Africa Climate Summit](#)', September 4, 2023

²⁸ Republic of Uganda, '[Address by H.E. Jessica Alupo, Vice President of the Republic of Uganda at the General Debate at the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly](#)', September 21, 2023

sectors. Uganda's MRV tool also generates reports illustrating how this data aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goal indicators, fulfilling international and domestic reporting requirements and it tracks finance flows for specific climate actions, which is critical to identifying financing gaps and enhancing planning and budgeting for NDC implementation.

Zambia is the current chair of the AGN and is leading the technical tier of negotiations for Africa. The Minister of Green Economy and Environment, Collins Nzovu, highlighted the agreement to a Global Goal on Adaptation as a key metric of success for COP28 for the continent. Zambia has also recently submitted its [National Adaptation Plan](#) to the UNFCCC in advance of COP28, joining the 16 African countries that have already done so. In addition, Zambia's bilateral creditors, which include China and members of the Paris Club of creditor nations, have agreed to a memorandum of understanding to restructure \$6.3 billion of debt that Zambia defaulted on during the COVID pandemic. Instead of paying \$6 billion over the next 10 years, Zambia will now pay \$750 million to creditors over the next 10 years.²⁹

Africa's role in alliances and groupings

G77 and China is an alliance of 134 developing countries, 52 of which are African members. The alliance is chaired by Cuba. It is the largest negotiating block at COP meetings, with experienced negotiators. The group was instrumental in the landmark decision taken at COP27 to establish a Loss and Damage Fund. Developing countries have since conceded to the World Bank hosting the fund, though this was not their preferred arrangement, in an effort to agree to a draft deal for presentation to the heads of state at COP28.³⁰ Other key priority issues for this group include a call for developed countries to enhance their emissions reduction targets and to scale up the provision of support for developing countries, including the long-standing climate finance commitment of \$100 billion.³¹

Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) comprises 39 low-lying SIDS that are vulnerable to sea-level rise and weather extremes. There are seven African AOSIS states, namely Cabo Verde, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, the Maldives, Mauritius, São Tomé and Príncipe and the Seychelles. Priority issues for this group include the call for a formal platform to take stock of the gap to reaching the 1.5°C goal, an immediate end to fossil fuel subsidies by major emitters, financial support for loss and damage (additional to the \$100 billion goal) and more grant-based finance. Issues related to coastal resilience, oceans and blue economy are also key themes where this group advocates for greater ambition.

The **Climate Vulnerable Forum** is an international partnership of countries highly vulnerable to climate change. The forum, initiated in 2009, serves as a South-South cooperation platform for participating governments to act together. It is composed of 55 countries, 17 of which are from Africa (Burkina Faso, Niger, Comoros, DRC, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Senegal, the Gambia, South Sudan, Ghana, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Tunisia, Madagascar, Malawi and Morocco), with five new African members having sought

²⁹ Jorgelina Do Rosario and Rachel Savage, '[Zambia, bilateral creditors agree debt rework memorandum of understanding](#)', *Reuters*, October 14, 2023

³⁰ Joe Lo, '[World Bank to initially host loss and damage fund under draft deal](#)', *Climate Home News*, November 7, 2023.

³¹ International Institute for Sustainable Development, '[Summary Report 31 October – 12 November 2021](#)', 2021

membership in 2021 (namely Eswatini, Uganda, Liberia, Guinea and Benin). It is led by a rotating chair for a period of two years. Ghana is currently chairing it for the period 2023-2024

Brazil, South Africa, India and China (BASIC) advocates for the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and requests developed countries to dramatically reduce their emissions and increase support to developing countries on finance, technology transfer and capacity building. South Africa is also part of the BRICS grouping, which has similar climate objectives to BASIC and several overlapping members. In January of 2024, the BRICS grouping will expand to include Egypt and Ethiopia. All these countries have severe development and poverty challenges to deal with but are also high GHG emitters. These countries have large populations and argue that climate equity should take account of historical GHG emissions and per capita emissions data. They are all focused on pathways towards a low-carbon, climate resilient transition that are just and do not leave anyone behind. They also mostly defend gas as a transitional fuel.

The **Least Developed Countries (LDC)** negotiating group on climate change, constitutes 46 countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change due to their low economic status and climate vulnerability. They have also only contributed less than 1% of global CO₂ emissions. There are 33 African members of this grouping.³² Priority issues for this group include climate justice and compensation, finance, adaptation and support to address loss and damage. The LDC Chair is currently Senegal (2022-2023). This is an influential position in terms of developing proposals and common positions on different negotiating points in advance of COP28. The **Like-Minded Group of Developing Countries**, a group of 24 countries, including three African countries (Algeria, Egypt, and Zimbabwe) has priority areas similar to the LDC Group.

The Coalition of Rainforest Nations, which comprises eight African countries pushes for financing and support for REDD+ initiatives, for constructive outcomes on transparency, clarity and finalisation on Article 6 related to taxing mitigation to fund adaptation, as well as clarity on forest carbon credits. Members include Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda and Zambia.

OPEC is an oil producing group with 13 members, over half of which are from Africa (Algeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria and the Republic of Congo). These countries are advocates of oil, gas and coal have long argued in support of technologies like carbon capture and sequestration to allow them to keep burning fossils. Saudi Arabia, for example, has been promoting the concept of a circular carbon economy focusing on the '4Rs': reduce, reuse, recycle and remove. OPEC members are concerned that a fast-paced energy transition will destroy the hydrocarbon revenues on which they rely before they have a chance to diversify into low-carbon economies. These countries are pushing for a just transition that includes compensation for a transition away from fossil fuels.

³² This includes Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia

AU champions are selected by the AU Assembly to lead the implementation of key initiatives and to create awareness on certain initiatives at continental and international levels. They also play an important role in securing the necessary support required to ensure implementation.³³

Conclusion

Despite ongoing geopolitical tensions, climate action and policy implementation must remain high on the political agenda of all countries to address the extreme impact of climate change on the African continent. The role of developed countries and the initiatives they support will be of primary importance for African negotiators, who now approach climate negotiations with a unified climate position in the Nairobi Declaration and a comprehensive Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan. These documents give the continent's negotiators a clear guide to ensure that the outcomes of COP28 are strategically aligned with Africa's development needs and interests. African countries' membership in key international forums and negotiating blocs are also a critical avenue for understanding how the continent pursues certain agendas at COP28. The countries residing over the chairmanships for the AGN, AMCEN and CAHOSCC are of particular importance. For COP28 to deliver meaningful outcomes, African countries and coalitions must drive an ambitious agenda, both domestically and internationally and maintain their strong voices in Africa's climate diplomacy.

³³ Current AU Climate Champions include, Seychelles (African Islands Climate Commission), Republic of Congo (Congo Basin Climate Commission), Niger (Sahel Climate Commission), Guinea (African Renewable Energy Initiative), Gabon (Africa Adaptation Initiative), Morocco (Initiative for the Adaptation of African Agriculture) and the President of Kenya, William Ruto.

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About SAIIA

SAIIA is an independent, non-government think tank whose key strategic objectives are to make effective input into public policy, and to encourage wider and more informed debate on international affairs, with particular emphasis on African issues and concerns.

Cover image: Madagascar Topographic Map Cyclone Batsirai 2022: category 4 Tropical Cyclone Batsirai over the West Indian Ocean. / FrankRamspott via Getty images

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