EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ASSESSING CLIMATE CHANGE, COP26 COMMITMENTS IN AFRICA

NIGERIA
SOUTH AFRICA
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Assessing Climate Change, COP26 Commitments in Africa:
Case Studies of
Nigeria,
South Africa and Uganda

Corporate Accountability & Public Participation Africa

Community # Solidarity # Impact

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If world wars were the leading human catastrophe of the 20th century, climate change will qualify as the leading human and environmental crisis of the 21st century. Climate change can be described as the "long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, such as through variations in the solar cycle"[1]. But there could be other reasons for climate change. Since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas[2].

This situation has led to increased concentration of Green House Gasses (GHG) in the earth's atmosphere. The immediate consequence of this is extreme weather patterns, heat waves, drought, rising sea levels resulting in devastating floods, and biodiversity loss. As extreme weather patterns impact environments, land, and water sources, they cause human displacements, illnesses, degradation of ecosystems, loss of shelter and livelihoods while intensifying conflicts and competition for scarce resources.

At the heart of the climate crisis are questions about how the human specie interacts with its environment and how best humans can relate in harmony with nature. Therefore, addressing the climate crisis requires a whole-society approach to manage current emission levels, and a plan towards an energy transition from fossil fuel to renewables like wind, hydro, solar, biomass, geothermal, etc., to safeguard the environment and build a sustainable future.

From time immemorial, there have been fervent efforts to raise awareness about climate change and mobilize efforts and commitments towards curbing it. In fact, the global climate change discourse and environmental governance can be traced back to the United Nations Scientific Conference in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972. There, the first appraisal of global human impact on environment happened. The Stockholm Conference ended with participants adopting a series of principles on the environment, including the Stockholm Declaration which placed environmental issues on the front burner of international concerns, and marked the start of dialogues between industrialized and developing countries on the linkages between water, economic growth, air pollution and the wellbeing of people around the world[3].

[1] What Is Climate Change? (n.d.). United Nations. Retrieved September 18, 2022, from https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change
[2] Ibid.
[3] United Nations. (1972). United Nations Conference on the Environment, Stockholm 1972. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/stockholm1972

With the recognition that international cooperation was necessary to tackle environmental problems that transcend national boundaries, subsequent mega conferences[4], and numerous multilateral environmental agreements began to emerge around climate change discourses.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is one such multilateral agreement adopted at the Earth Summit otherwise known as UN Conference and Development (UNCED) in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. On March 21, 1994, the UNFCCC entered into force with 196 countries ratifying it. The international treaty acknowledges the existence of anthropogenic climate change, provides the framework for climate negotiations and binds member countries to act in the interest of human safety to stabilize GHG concentrations in the earth's atmosphere.

Each year, the UNFCCC holds a series of meetings known as the Conference of the Parties (COPs) to review the progress made by members in halting climate change. The COP is made up of representatives from all parties and is considered the UNFCCC's apex body responsible for decision-making. Each party to the UNFCCC is represented at sessions of the conference by a national delegation consisting of one or more officials authorized to represent and negotiate on its behalf. However, to strengthen their bargaining power and position, countries usually negotiate in blocs.[5] Since March 1995 when the first COP was held in Germany, it has met every year subsequently.

The negotiation of the Paris Agreement at COP21 has been widely celebrated as a watershed in the global climate journey towards decarbonization. Negotiated by 195 countries in December 2015, the landmark accord established a universal framework for action on climate change to ensure the preservation and sustainability of the earth. Central to this agreement are climate change plans and actions to be developed by respective signatories known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

The NDC explains how a country intends to combat the effects of climate change, enhance climate resilience, and reduce its national GHG emissions in alignment with the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. To this end, countries are required to update, communicate, and submit their NDCs to the UNFCCC Secretariat every five years to reflect ambitious climate actions that improve on previous commitments. However, there are doubts about whether climate ambitions can be achieved ultimately given the varying circumstances of nations,

[4] International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2022, June 5). Do Mega-Conferences Advance Sustainable Development? International Institute for Sustainable Development. Retrieved October 08, 2022, from https://www.iisd.org/articles/deep-dive/do-mega-conferences-advance-sustainable-development

[5] Party Groupings. (n.d.). United Nations Climate Change. Retrieved August 18, 2022, from https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/parties-non-party-stakeholders/parties/party-groupings

arguments over climate responsibilities such as big polluters paying up for historical damages they have caused vulnerable developing nations, and ideal approaches for adapting to and mitigating climate change. In particular, the capacity of states in Africa to transform NDC commitments into real-life actions and interventions has come under doubt.

Africa's Climate Ambitions and NDCs

While all 54 countries in Africa have signed the Paris Agreement, the African Development Bank (AfDB) notes that most NDCs submitted by African countries were hastily put together and did not consider long-term effects on national goals[6]. Even though there is improved awareness of the urgent need to act on climate change in Africa, significant encumbrances in the race towards a clean energy transition and carbon-less society continue to stifle real progress. For instance, the economies of many African countries are currently on life support because of high public debts and post-coronavirus pandemic-induced economic contractions that have combined with other stressors to hamper national efforts to achieve sustainable development and climate goals.

This report examines the NDC commitments and climate-action progress of African countries as the world prepares for COP27 by focusing on three case studies: Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda, representing the Western, Southern, and Eastern regions of the continent. The report notes that all three case studies have updated their NDCs with climate change ambitions that are improvements over their previous NDCs. However, the following underlying factors continue to inhibit the feasibility of their climate commitments:

(1) Across the three countries studied, state authorities are keen on getting things right but there is still room for improvement, especially in the area of implementation and enforcement of sound policies that regulate GHG emissions, and acknowledges the concerns of local populations in the journey towards a just and sustainable energy transition. For instance, despite its aspirations to cut carbon emissions, the Nigerian government continues to perpetuate fossil fuel exploration and commit to the usage of other non-renewable energy sources that contribute to GHG emissions.

An example is the earmarked 30% allocation (provided in the Petroleum Industry Act, PIA 2021) for the exploration of crude oil in the country's frontier basins. Likewise, the Nigerian government is playing a role in the

[6]Africa Development Bank. (2019, April 16). Africa NDC Hub. September 31, 2022, from https://afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/africa-ndc-hub

establishment of heavy carbon investments like the gigantic Dangote Refinery and Petrochemicals[7]. Also supporting this massive hydrocarbon

entity are International Financial Institutions and global banking consortiums. These include the World Bank the African Development Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, and trade banks from China, India, and some European countries[8]. This further underlines the global hypocrisy, inconsistency, and lack of political will behind the absence of traction in the efforts toward curtailing global warming and achieving a carbon-free world.

While committing to a net zero CO2 target by 2050, South Africa has largely not been able to wean itself off reliance on coal. South Africa relies on coal for per cent of its total energy supply[9]. According to Climate Action Tracker, South Africa's emissions trajectory for 2030 is expected to "decrease by around 5 – 6 per cent below 2010 levels but would end up at around 36 per cent to 38 per cent above 1990 levels (excluding LULUCF)"[10] - much above the target range set in its 2021 updated NDC.

Another variable countermanding South Africa's GHG emission reduction aspirations is the role of the state-owned electricity company, ESKOM, which is driving towards more coal consumption due to its vertical monopoly over the nation's energy system, and its favouring of its coal-fired power plants over private renewable generation. For instance, Eskom is reportedly putting final touches to the construction of a 4800 megawatts dry-cooled plant on the hills of South Africa's Mpumalanga province. This project also known as the Kusile Power station is set to burn as much as 15 million tons of coal annually[11].

If taken together with Eskom's poor financial health and inability to fund clean energy projects, the situation may succeed in hindering South Africa from achieving its emissions reduction targets. As for Uganda, the implementation of its NDC targets of approximately 22 per cent reduction of national greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 is constrained by its national circumstances and development priorities. Uganda's greatest mitigation potential is in the land use, land-use change, and forestry sectors.

[7]Azeez, B. W. (2021, August 4). FEC approves $2.7bn for NNPC's acquisition of stake in Dangote Refinery | TheCable. Retrieved October 17, 2022, from https://www.thecable.ng/fec-approves-2-7bn-for-nnpcs-acquisition-of-stake-in-dangote-refinery
[8]Akinyelure, D. (n.d.). Africa's richest man arranges $4.5 bln of financing for oil refinery | Reuters. U.S. Retrieved October 17, 2022, from https://www.reuters.com/article/nigeria-dangote-loans-idUSL5N1UK61J
[9]Christopher. C. (2022, August 30). *The Just Energy Transition Partnership with South Africa will hinge on domestic reform* | Atlantic Council. Retrieved October 17, 2022, from https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/energysource/the-just-energy-transition-partnership-with-south-africa-will-hinge-on-domestic-reform/
[10]Ibid
[11] Ishioma. E. (2022, July 18) South Africa's Gigantic Coal Plant Versus Climate Realities. Retrieved October 18, 2022, from https://venturesafrica.com/south-africa-gigantic-coal-power-plant-versus-climate-realities/

Under its business-as-usual scenario, the AFOLU sector featured the most significant source of emissions for three gases (CO2, CH4, and N2O), and accounted for 86.4 per cent of the total emissions. Comparatively, the energy sector accounted for 10.9 per cent, and the waste sector and Industrial Processes and Product Use accounted for 2.1 per cent and 0.6 per cent respectively[12]. This means that a successful reduction in emissions in the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector can have a big impact on Uganda's total GHG emission profile thus guaranteeing the likelihood of meeting its NDC aspirations.

Unfortunately, approximately 90 per cent of Uganda's energy needs are generated from biomass, mostly dominated by firewood and charcoal which remain the primary energy source for many sectors of the economy apart from the transport and service sectors[13]. It goes without saying that this level of nearly absolute reliance on biomass by big sections of the population has wide-ranging implications both for the ambitious plan to reverse the current deforestation trend (of approximately 14 per cent in 2013) and increase forest cover to 21 per cent in 2030[14] and other emission reduction aspirations noted in its NDC.

(2) The three countries under focus also present critical challenges in their march towards a just energy transition. In the case of Nigeria, a major drawback in its just energy transition is the plan to use natural gas as transition energy. Many stakeholders believe that Nigeria is well positioned to gain from this due to the abundance of fossil fuel resources in its environment as well as high gas prices in Europe occasioned by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. However, the use of gas as a transition fuel comes with a dilemma for climate change goals.

Although it is a low carbon, natural gas is a fossil fuel that emits GHG which contributes to global warming. Also, considering the situation of continuous gas flaring and venting in its land despite government efforts, and the enactment of laws to curb them, Nigeria and any African country risk undermining their carbon-free objectives if they intensify natural gas exploration over the next few years.

[12] MWE.(2019). Uganda's First Biennial Update Report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Government of Uganda, Ministry of Water and Environment. Kampala. Retrieved October 8, 2022, from https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/FBUR%20Final_2019.pdf
[13] http://envalert.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Uganda-NDC-Rapid-Situtational-Assessment_NDC-Implementation-Stocktake_May-2020_Final.pdf
[14] https://www.inforse.org/africa/pdfs/PolicyBrief_Uganda_CSO_view_on_NDCs_Oct_2019.pdf

Indeed, any new exploration for gas, alongside the exploitation of Africa's vast reserves of oil, could make it close to impossible for the world to limit global heating to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels[15]. Additionally, the exploration of natural gas as transitory energy poses a risk of Nigeria being "locked in" to a path of non-renewable energy generation.

Also, Nigeria's energy transition plan makes no provision for holding energy multinationals to account for their despoliation of oil-producing communities of the Niger Delta nor does it have any in-built provision to ensure that a truly just energy transition occurs without a carryover of the same exploitative and environmentally damaging practices associated with crude oil exploration. The acquisition by Royal Dutch Shell of Nigerian solar energy provider, Daystar Power, as part of efforts to cut its GHG emission and focus on renewables raises concern given its dark history in Nigeria's oil-producing communities[16].

In the case of South Africa, Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) does not fully accommodate the interest of formal and informal workers in coal-dependent municipalities, and others who would be displaced or adversely affected in the process of the energy transition. Given the extent of coal dependency in South Africa's economy, a just energy transition requires a more careful and nuanced approach that takes care of the interests and fears of all, most especially communities, workers, and other stakeholders.

A running theme in the energy transition of several African states, South Africa inclusive, is the placement of the private sector as the leading force. As we have seen with fossil fuel extractivism, the private sector often prioritizes profit over people's needs and the environment while using Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a cynical measure to divide communities and push its false narratives.

Unlike others, Uganda's energy transition plans envision the exploration of the country's newly discovered oil deposits to drive growth and fund renewables. In 2006, commercially viable oil was discovered in the country's Albertine Graben region, and foreign companies such as the French Total Energies and the Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) have signed agreements with the government to extract oil in this eco-sensitive area[17].

[15]Fiona. H (2022, August1). African Nations Set to Make the Case for a Big Rise in Fossil Fuel Output | The Guardian. Retrieved October 15, 2022, from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/01/african-nations-set-to-make-the-case-for-big-rise-in-fossil-fuel-output
[16]Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. (2021, February 4). Nigeria: In historic Dutch court ruling, Nigerian farmers and Friends of the Earth win oil pollution case against Shell | Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. Retrieved October 18, 2022, from https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/nigeria-in-historic-dutch-court-ruling-nigerian-farmers-and-friends-of-the-earth-win-oil-pollution-case-against-shell/
[17]Both Ends (2022, September 27). Uganda's Energy Future | Both ENDS. Retrieved October 18, 2022, from https://www.bothends.org/en/Our-work/Dossiers/Uganda-s-Energy-Future/

There is also the ongoing construction of the 1,445 km East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) also known as the Uganda–Tanzania Crude Oil Pipeline (UTCOP) which is intended to transport crude oil from Uganda's oil fields to the Port of Tanga, Tanzania on the Indian Ocean. Once completed, the pipeline will be the longest-heated crude oil pipeline in the world[18]. Because of the large-scale displacement of communities and wildlife, and the condition of how this project fails to square up to the global push towards emission reduction, global environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth Africa and activists in the country are protesting the construction and finance of EACOP.

Their principal argument is that Uganda's fossil fuel exploration undermines national and global imperatives for emission reduction and transition to renewables. In addition to the concerns about exploring fossil fuel resources amid the global race to reduce carbon emissions is the increasing militarization of resource-rich localities. Already, there are increasing reports of human rights violations, targeted attacks on activists, students, and community people speaking up against the likely costs and social impacts of the EACOP project on the environment, livelihoods, and cultural heritage of community people whose land resources will be affected and are already being acquired without compensation[19].

(3) There is no doubt that climate finance will be critical for enabling Africa to adapt to the growing impacts of climate change and to ensure that its future development path is consistent with the goal of limiting global warming to no more than 1.5°C[20]. However, despite the positive objectives of the NDCs, financing Africa's climate ambition is becoming a tall order for the continent and its development partners. African countries are yet to recover from the economic dislocation caused by the COVID-19 lockdown as well as other associated economic crises.

Amid a downturn in the global economy, Nigeria and South Africa, the two biggest economies on the continent, have both faced economic recession at least once in the past decade together with rising public debt, inflation, and cash crunch. Uganda on the other hand, is an extremely impoverished country, with a mounting public debt of at least $20.98 billion. Now according to the IMF, growth forecasts for both Nigeria and

[18] Hydrocarbons Technology. (n.d.). Crude Oil Pipeline Project, East Africa | Hydrocarbons Technology. Retrieved October 18, 2022, from https://www.hydrocarbons-technology.com/projects/crude-oil-pipeline-project-east-africa/
[19] Why is compensation of oil pipeline affected persons taking long? | Monitor. (2022, February 17). Monitor. Retrieved October 18, 2022, from https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/business/technology/why-is-compensation-of-oil-pipeline-affected-persons-taking-long--3719728
[20] Bhattacharya, A. (2022, February 8). The criticality of climate finance for Africa | Brookings. Retrieved October 18, 2022, from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2022/02/08/the-criticality-of-climate-finance-for-africa/b

South Africa for 2023 have been downwardly reviewed to 3.2 per cent and 1.4 per cent respectively[21]. The reluctance of the global North to make true their commitment to Africa's climate ambitions is also a matter of concern. To date, "only $80 billion of the $100 billion per annum commitment by developed countries for developing countries by 2020 has been met; of this, only around $20 billion was provided to Africa over 2016-2019"[22]. Meanwhile, the financial implication of climate mitigation and adaptation in Africa continues to rise as the environmental crisis deepens. This has prompted the Africa Group of Negotiators to call for $1.3 trillion a year in climate finance to be made available from 2025.

In order to address the financial constraints affecting African countries, there are suggestions for alternative financing options like the global trade in carbon credits. Carbon credits are permits that allow the holder to emit one ton of carbon or equivalent greenhouse gases. "These permits are issued by governments or independent verifying companies and can be traded.

Typically, carbon credits are issued to companies or projects that reduce or avoid carbon emissions. Firms that exceed government emissions limits (in places where those exist) or that seek to compensate for their carbon emissions then buy these credits to offset their emissions footprint"[23]. The trio of Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda have keyed into prospects and activities of negotiating climate finance via carbon trade mechanisms. The idea behind carbon trading is that it should incentivize lower emissions and provide funding for embarking on infrastructure powered by renewables.

But this is rarely the outcome that emerges at the end of the day. Rather, what has been made evidently clear is that carbon trading is an escape route for big polluters to avoid transitioning thereby undermining global climate aspirations. "Carbon offsets provide carbon majors with a more affordable approach to greenhouse gas mitigation than investing in transitioning their current operations. Carbon offsetting is simply a way for corporates to minimize their tax liability"[24].

[21] Nwachukwu, O. (2022, October 11). IMF slashes Nigeria's growth forecast to 3.2% | Businessday NG. Retrieved October 18, 2022, from https://businessday.ng/business-economy/article/imf-slashes-nigerias-growth-forecast-to-3-2/
[22] Bhattacharya, A. (2022, February 8). The criticality of climate finance for Africa | Brookings. Retrieved October 18, 2022, from https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2022/02/08/the-criticality-of-climate-finance-for-africa/b
[23] Augustine, A., Odueso, T., Modise, E., & Azuh, B. (2022, June 1). Unlocking the billion-dollar carbon credit market for Africa's cleantech startups | TechCabal. Retrieved October 18, 2022, from https://techcabal.com/2022/06/01/solstroem-wants-to-help-african-clean-energy-startups-access-the-voluntary-carbon-credit-market/
[24] Leigh. E (2021, January 22) Why South Africa's carbon offset market is looking to expand. (2021, January 22)| Energy Monitor. Retrieved October 18, 2022, from https://www.energymonitor.ai/policy/carbon-markets/why-south-africas-carbon-offset-market-is-looking-to-expand

(4) The transport sector is a key player in mitigating climate change across all case studies. For instance, Nigeria is the 10th largest producer of carbon dioxide emissions from an average journey. It was found to have the longest average commute time at just over an hour - 61.97 minutes[25]. Similarly, emissions from the South African transport sector account for 10.8 percent of the country's total greenhouse gas emissions, with road transport being responsible for 91.2 percent of these GHG emissions[26].

"With an estimate of 4,859 grams of CO2 per journey, South Africa is reportedly the country producing the most carbon dioxide emissions per journey, making them and Lebanon (4,621g) the only countries to produce more than 4,500 grams of Co2 per journey"[27]. On average, Uganda's transport and agriculture sectors combined were responsible for 62 per cent of national emissions in 2000 and are projected to represent 70 per cent by 2030 under a 'business as usual scenario[28].

Across all three countries, the transport sector accounts for significant GHG emissions and urban air pollution. These pollutants from the transport sector are powered by fossil-derived gasoline, diesel, and liquid coal. Transitioning to a less carbon-powered transport economy will not be easy because of the prominent social and economic inequalities in each of the three countries, and in extension Africa. Ultimately to raise the eco-transport ambitions, countries must not only work to improve the welfare and living conditions of citizens but also explore pathways to transport decarbonization that recognizes local needs, realities, and purchasing power.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Africa has demonstrated ample evidence of enthusiasm and commitment towards effective action to combat climate change. Unfortunately, these efforts are hampered by the continent's national circumstances, the reluctance of rich countries of the Global North to meet up with climate finance needs, and the pursuit of false solutions. One such false solution is the plan of African leaders to pursue the adoption of natural gas as a transition fuel for African countries.

[25] Anazi. Z. (2021, December 3). SA ranked the highest CO2 producer in transport | Esi Africa. Retrieved October 15, 2022 https://www.esi-africa.com/news/sa-ranked-the-highest-co2-producer-in-transport/

[26] Department of Transport, South Africa. Green Transport Strategy for South Africa: (2018 – 2050). Retrieved October 15, 202, from https://www.transport.gov.za/documents/11623/89294/Green_Transport_Strategy_2018_2050_onlineversion.pdf/71e19f1d-259e-4c55-9b27-30db418f105a

[27] Anazi. Z. (2021, December 3). SA ranked the highest CO2 producer in transport | Esi Africa. Retrieved October 15, 2022 https://www.esi-africa.com/news/sa-ranked-the-highest-co2-producer-in-transport/

[28] Angela. E., Thet H.T., Linus. P., (2018, March 18) Uganda's National Transport Master Plan: Potential for low carbon development | Global Climate Action Partnership. Retrieved October 13, 2022, from https://globalclimateactionpartnership.org/resource/ugandas-transport-plan-low-carbon-development/

These leaders, those who have prospected oil and minerals for decades with nothing to show for it, argue that Africa should at least be allowed to build and develop its economy using low-carbon fossil fuels[29] like gas pointing out how the countries of the Global North built their own economies with fossil fuel and slavery. For instance, Uganda argues that it needs to exploit its newly discovered oil fields to build its economy and create jobs.

Although clever, these arguments are nothing but excuses for maintaining the destructive status quo of fossil fuel exploration and usage in Africa. Indeed, any new exploration for gas, alongside the exploitation of Africa's vast reserves of oil, could make it close to impossible for the world to limit global heating to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels[30]. If Africa is currently bearing the worst burden of the climate crisis despite contributing the least emission, then one can only imagine how bad things can get for the continent if global warming persists.

At worst, these arguments expose just how much African leaders appreciate the immense opportunity the ongoing energy transition presents for the continent. While previous transitions in energy and production systems left Africa behind, the transition to renewables can put the continent in the leadership of the future. This is because almost all renewable energy sources can be found in Africa. For instance, Africa receives the most sunlight in comparison to all the other continents on Earth.

A recent study indicates that a solar generating facility covering just 0.3 per cent of the area comprising North Africa could supply all the energy required by the European Union[31]. Also, Africa has a large coastline, where wind and wave power resources are abundant and underutilized in the north and south of the continent. Geothermal power has the potential to provide considerable amounts of energy in many eastern African nations while the availability of wind on the western coast of Africa is substantial, exceeding 3,750 kW·h[32]. There is also enormous potential for geothermal energy in the East African Rift which is roughly 5,900 kilometers in length and spans several countries in East Africa including Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia[33].

Therefore, instead of wasting time on a destructive status quo of fossil extractivism, Africa should be preoccupied with how to take full ownership of these renewable energy potentials and invest in the infrastructures to make them drive harmonious growth and equitable development for the continent and all its people. At the moment, there is a renewed "scramble for Africa" manifested

[29]Chime. V. (2022, September 18). Gas as transition fuel: Will African Stakeholders reach a Compromise ahead of COP27 | The Cable. Retrieved October 6, 2022, from https://www.thecable.ng/gas-as-transition-fuel-will-african-stakeholders-reach-a-compromise-ahead-of-cop27
[30]Fiona. H. (2022, August 1) African nations expected to make a big case for big rise in fossil fuel output | The Guardian. Retrieved October 12, 2022, from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/01/african-nations-set-to-make-the-case-for-big-rise-in-fossil-fuel-output
[31] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renewable_energy_in_Africa
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

in multinational companies racing against time to take vantage positions in Africa's renewable energy field including buying off forested areas for use as carbon sinks, wind, and solar energy sources and infrastructures.

This means corporations have caught on to the game while state actors are squabbling about fossil fuel. Unless African leaders act, the transition to renewable energy sources could become a new center for host communities and multinational squabbles, alongside a repeat of the same exploitative practices associated with fossil fuel extraction.

Ultimately, what African leaders must understand is that transition to renewables is an inevitability. It is a question of when not if. The key question for Africa is what kind of transition? Would it be an all-inclusive, balanced, and equitable transition that leaves no one behind? Or would it be one that renews the same dynamics of fossil fuel extractivism based on cruel exploitation for profit above people's needs and disregard for the environment and ecosystem? Now Africa has the chance of becoming a master of its destiny and turning a page on the past.

Only a just energy transition that is fair, equitable, gender-sensitive, democratic, affordable, and insulated from corporate influence can place the continent on a new path of growth and development. As the continent prepares for COP27, more than ever before, Africa's voices need to be strengthened to advance the interests of the continent's climate ambitions.

AFRICAN LEADERS MUST:

(1) **Leverage Green Economic Opportunities:** As the world begins to transit to renewables, increased demands for electric vehicles, solar panels, batteries, etc. which are produced with critical minerals some of which are sourced from Africa places the continent at a vantage point to renegotiate its position on the global stage while stimulating inclusive economic growth. This would require the government of African countries to take the lead and establish an enabling environment for attracting investment in renewables taking care to avoid re-establishing the exploitative, anti-development of resource-rich communities, and environmentally damaging character of fossil fuel extractivism of the past decades. In establishing a sustainable environment for renewable investment, state authorities and stakeholders in Africa must also utilize their resource to negotiate for knowledge transfer of technical skills and capacities that will boost human capital on the continent.

(2) **Remove Barriers to Renewable Energy Technologies in Africa Such as Import Tariffs:** This is necessary to make renewable energy accessible and affordable to most of the energy-poor African population. For instance, Nigeria still imposes import tariffs on renewable energy components. A zero tax on renewable components alongside other incentives will go a long way to speed up the process towards improved energy access in the country and Africa.

(3) **Withdraw Support for Heavy-Carbon Project**: Such projects like Dangote refineries and petrochemicals and Uganda's EACOP are targeted at locking Africa into Fossil fuel. Financiers and African governments must withdraw all support for such projects.

(4) **Frame Just transition in an African Context:** There is a need to draw up a Just Transition Agenda for Africa that frames the understanding of just and equitable transition from an African context in order to take care of the "one-size fits all" conception of the subject in mainstream conversation which fails to account for Africa's peculiarities. A just transition in an African context must be equitable, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and respect the human language - cultural and religious rights of peoples. A just transition in an African context must also acknowledge local realities, expectations, and concerns of communities while also offering space for social dialogue. The Friends of the Earth Africa's 'Just Renewable Energy Plan for Africa' offers a perfect vision and system approach for a just transition framed in the context of African realities[34].

(5) **Protect Workers and Communities**: Every transition comes with a price, sometimes painful. However, with the right policies and social protection, employees in heavy-carbon industries and communities can be protected. Africa need programmes to re-train and relocate skills from fossil fuel industries to renewables, and remedial measures to upgrade fossil-fuel communities (Niger Delta in Nigeria, coal-dependent communities in South Africa, etc.) with a view to protecting lives and livelihood.

(6) **Harness Capacity to Secure Funding Support to Finance Africa's Climate Ambition:** The Africa Group of Negotiators has called for $1.3 trillion a year in climate finance to be made available from 2025. There is a need to utilize the global stage afforded by COP 27 to campaign and secure commitment to this as well as a strategy to follow up and net in the commitments after the conference.

[34] Rudo. A., Sanyanga H., Sam C. G., Sara S., (August 2021) A Just Recovery Renewable Energy Plan for Africa. Friends of the Earth Africa. Retrieved October 6, 2018, from https://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Friends-of-the-Earth-Just-Recovery-Renewable-Energy-Plan-for-Africa-2021.pdf

(7) **Drop False Solution Schemes:** Prevailing conversations which put forward carbon market, trading schemes, and gas as a transition fuel as a pathway towards carbon emission reduction begs the question. They are false capitalist solutions that do not move the needle on climate goals but are intended to make the big polluters avoid reckoning and perpetuate fossil fuel burning. The only pathway towards climate justice, carbon neutrality, and a just energy transition is by stopping fossil fuel burning, transitioning from fossil fuel power to renewable energy, making historic polluters pay for loss and damage, and transforming societies towards economic and political paradigms that promote inclusive growth and development.

(8) **Increase Climate Change Education and Awareness:** While many people in Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda are noticing the effects of climate change around them, they are starved of real-time information on what exactly it is or what must be done to address these changes. An investment in climate education for the public is most important to influence voluntary actions toward mitigating the effects of climate change. Successful national adaptation and mitigation responses to climate change must be fair, inclusive, and spur broad public support and interest.

(9) **Ensure Human Rights protection**: Mainstream human rights protection into climate change mitigation and adaptation actions while encouraging social dialogue with communities, media, and civil society to negotiate Africa's energy transition imperatives.

(10) **Scale Up Adaptive Capacities:** The recent flooding episodes in Uganda and Nigeria show that a lot is still lacking in the terms of building resilience and providing adaptation support for victims of climate change in Africa. Nigeria continues to lack effective adaptation and response mechanisms for weather emergencies like well-trained and equipped firefighters, police and civil defense units, well-equipped hospitals and field clinics, public shelter manned and unmanned aerial surveillance, etc. Building capacity in this regard will save lives while also offering protection and succour to affected communities.

THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY MUST:

(1) **Pay Loss and Damage:** It is time for the global north and big polluters to make reparations for historical losses suffered by individuals and communities on the frontline of the climate crisis in Africa.

This demand has been a prominent component of Africa's proposals in global climate negotiations.

(2) **Cancel the Debt:** Africa's economies need a breather through debt cancellation in order to better focus and redirect scarce resources to their climate change actions and aspirations.

(3) **Stop Financing Heavy-Carbon Projects in Africa:** Financiers of heavy-carbon projects in Africa, especially European governments, Asian and North American financial institutions must stop pumping monies into projects that risk locking Africa into fossil-fuel dependency.

(4) **Stop fossil fuel burning:** The most contribution to global warming comes from the industrialized world. False solutions like carbon trading will continue to create a false sense of progress while global temperature continues to rise. We need a concerted effort to stop fossil fuel burning and move towards the use of renewables in order to accelerate the reduction of GHG emissions and by extension global warming.

(5) **Channel finance and technical support:** International financiers need to contribute to the development of renewable energy infrastructure in Africa in adherence to just energy transition ideals.

About Corporate Accountability & Public Participation Africa

Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA) is a Pan-African non-governmental organisation that works to advance human rights, challenge corporate abuse of natural resources and build community power for inclusive development and participatory governance.

CAPPA is passionately devoted to working with African communities to build partnerships with them towards taking collective social action for the promotion and defence of the rights of peoples. It challenges the abuse of natural resources, the environment and local people by corporate entities and state policies and practices.
The CAPPA team comprises dedicated staff, working with community volunteers, coalitions, and various networks. CAPPA is committed to policies and actions that would help redress the inequality crises in Nigeria and across Africa and enable a socially just and equitable human civilization on the continent of Africa.

CAPPA aims to stop and prevent unsustainable corporate practices, improve inclusive and participatory governance, and mitigate the impacts of harmful corporate and state practices on people and communities. Its mission is to nurture movements of African communities and a new generation of leaders working shoulder to shoulder to demand democratic community and natural resource governance, inclusive participation in development policies processes, end to inequalities and accountability for all forms of corporate and state abuses.

CAPPA envisions a continent whose development path is designed, modelled, and executed by Africans, respecting, and guaranteeing human rights, enabling social justice, and ensuring harmony with the environment. CAPPA works on five thematic areas. They include Social Justice and Public Services, Public Health, Environment and Extractives, Climate Change and Democracy Outreach.

You can read more here: https://cappaafrica.org/about-us/

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