

Africa Climate Summit's Faith Statement

07.09.2025

Introduction

The annual African Climate Week (ACW), convened under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), serves as one of the Regional Climate Weeks that prepare the ground for the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP). It provides a platform for governments, civil society, private sector actors, and non-state stakeholders to align regional priorities with the global climate agenda. As Africa prepares for COP30 in Belém, Brazil, the outcomes of ACW 2025 will play a critical role in shaping the continent's unified positions on climate finance, adaptation, loss and damage, and energy transitions. Within this process, faith actors bring a unique moral and ethical perspective, complementing technical and political negotiations with calls for justice, equity, and care for creation.

The Africa Climate Summit (ACS), co-hosted by Ethiopia and the African Union Commission in September 2025, represents Africa's flagship political platform for climate diplomacy. Building on the first ACS held in Nairobi in 2023, ACS2 emphasizes *"Accelerating Global Climate Solutions: Financing for Africa's Resilient and Green Development."* The summit is designed to amplify Africa's voice in COP processes, particularly on climate finance and implementation gaps. Faith communities, deeply rooted in African societies, are critical actors in this effort. Their engagement ensures that climate commitments are not limited to policy frameworks but are also grounded in moral responsibility, grassroots mobilization, and inclusive development approaches that reach the most vulnerable.

Against this backdrop, the African Climate Week and Africa Climate Summit's Statement of Faith emerges as a collective moral declaration by African faith actors. It signals the determination of churches, mosques, interfaith bodies, and faith-based organizations to stand in solidarity with global efforts to address the climate crisis, while calling for urgent action to correct systemic injustices. The statement reflects Africa's faith traditions and indigenous wisdom, offering a unifying message of hope, responsibility, and accountability ahead of COP30. By issuing this declaration, faith actors seek to elevate the ethical dimensions of climate action, ensuring that Africa's voice at COP is not only political and economic, but also spiritual, moral, and deeply rooted in the lived realities of its people.

We unanimously share the conviction, as a matter of principle, that a continent with such a level of demonstrated enhanced climate ambition within the current and updated NDCs must become fit to tackle the climate challenge, a responsibility shared with the global community. As the climate crisis is a present and future impediment to fullness of life, joint and ramped up effort among stakeholders is imperative.

With the vast reach and important role of faith institutions in shaping perspectives, offering moral, spiritual, and governance guidance, shaping behavior, advancing justice and serving those in need, we are concerned that faith actors and institutions are not extensively represented in various climate processes and decision-making spaces.

Overarching messages

Together,

We authenticate that creation is entrusted to humanity as a sacred responsibility, as affirmed in the Bible *“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it”* (Genesis 2:15) and in the Qur’an, which teaches that humanity is appointed as *khalifah* (stewards) on earth (Qur’an 2:30). These shared foundations compel us, as people of faith, to protect the integrity of creation, defend the vulnerable, and pursue justice in responding to the climate crisis.

While underscoring the complex reality of vulnerability and risk posed by the existential climate change threat that Africa finds itself in, *call for* revitalized effort by the Community of Nations to strengthen Africa’s action in adapting to climate impacts, and deliver grant based climate finance to drive real, and impactful climate solutions, and center gender and youth inclusion at the heart of climate policy and action.

We emphasize the importance of African governments to build, design and develop accountability arrangements that entrench transparency in execution of climate actions in Africa and their reporting on efforts to address climate change in Africa and contribute to Creation Care.

We commit to a united prophetic voice that advances climate justice advocacy and delivers Africa’s interests in various global arrangements and processes.

We commit to building stronger partnerships that address the climate crisis with governments, international agencies, local public and private actors, research and academia

Therefore,

The Africa Climate Summit Faith Statement stands as a collective moral witness at this critical moment for leaders to move beyond rhetoric, demonstrate resolve, and show solidarity to safeguard the earth for current and future generations.

We amplify the following as central matters for Africa that must be urgently considered: climate justice, equitable financing, strengthened adaptation, and the protection of human dignity alongside God's creation.

Thematic messages

1.0 Peace for Climate Justice

Research has shown that many African countries are lagging in the implementation of their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) due to the absence of peace and stability. Without peace, climate solutions cannot thrive; and without climate justice, peace itself remains fragile. Across the continent, communities are trapped in the double bind of climate vulnerability and conflict, where droughts, floods, and environmental degradation intensify displacement, insecurity, and fragile governance. Faith traditions remind us that justice and peace are inseparable, and that the well-being of creation depends on both.

Therefore, we call on African states to:

- Urgently implement their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) in ways that are conflict-sensitive and inclusive.
- Extend adaptation support to fragile and conflict-affected regions, including Sudan, the Sahel, and the Horn of Africa.
- Move beyond commitments on paper, translating NAPs into tangible protection and resilience for vulnerable communities.
- Address gaps where NAP implementation has created tensions, by ensuring participation, equity, and sensitivity to conflict dynamics.

We urge African leaders to;

- Prioritize peace as a foundation for climate justice in national and regional policies.
- Integrate environmental restoration, equitable resource-sharing, and inclusive governance into strategies for resilience.

- Break the cycle of fragility by demonstrating that peace and climate justice are inseparable both essential for safeguarding life, dignity, and the future of the continent.

2.0 Debt Cancellation as a Path to Climate Justice

From the heart of our spiritual traditions, we lift up the call of the *Jubilee*, a sacred time of release, renewal, and restoration. In the Bible, Jubilee (Leviticus 25) was a time when debts were cancelled, the land was allowed to rest, and justice was restored among the people. In the Qur'an, too, we are reminded that creation belongs to God and that humanity is entrusted as *khalifah* (stewards), not exploiters. Today, Africa faces a new form of bondage: many nations spend more on servicing external debts than on financing climate adaptation, while floods, droughts, and loss of biodiversity continue to devastate communities. This diversion of national wealth away from resilience and creation care undermines justice and deepens suffering. Acknowledging, that true justice is not found in endless debt service and exploitation, but in restoration, solidarity, and shared life for present and future generations.

Therefore, we:

- Call on global leaders, international financial institutions, and private lenders to embrace a new Jubilee, cancelling unjust debts so that African nations can redirect their resources toward protecting creation, building resilience, and supporting the most vulnerable. Without this moral and financial reset, Africa's people and ecosystems will remain trapped in cycles of debt, disaster, and despair.
- Urge African leaders to speak with one voice, demanding and insisting on the recognition of a global Jubilee year that addresses both debt and climate justice. This Jubilee must open space for nations to invest their GDP in climate adaptation, renewable energy, and sustainable development rather than in debt repayments.
- Call upon Governments and State actors to enhance transparency and exercise greater and responsible financial management in developing and deploying financial policies to manage and avert debt distress.

3.0 Climate Finance

Africa is on the frontlines of the climate crisis, bearing immense annual losses while receiving only a fraction of the support required. Most available funds are directed to mitigation, with little allocated to adaptation and almost none reaching Loss and Damage needs. COP29 left the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) unattended, creating further uncertainty and

deepening the injustice that Africa faces. This situation demands both continental resolve and international accountability.

As a matter of principle, urgently required adaptation finance should not increase the debt burden of already struggling vulnerable and poor nations. Debt imperils economies and it is deeply unjust if finance meant to address the climate crisis, safeguard life and livelihoods drives greater debt burden in these nations. Instead, it is an imperative of justice that carbon emitters pay for the damage they cause and offer reparation to poor and vulnerable nations.

We urge African leaders.

- To go beyond the unfinished outcomes of COP29 by uniting behind a bold, uncompromising position at the Africa Climate Summit and in the lead-up to COP30.
- Leaders must advocate for an NCQG implementation with a fair share for adaptation, and d Loss and Damage finance, and direct, unconditional grant-based support to vulnerable communities,
- To commit to enhancing mobilization efforts to assist their citizens. Africa must strengthen domestic accountability, reduce dependence on external debt, and prioritize investments that build resilience for the poorest and most affected.
- To consider macroeconomic impacts, structural realities, and safeguards while engaging in innovative sources of finance and ascertain just, and equitable climate finance for Africa's climate needs.

We urge Global North governments and leaders, whose historic emissions have fueled the crisis,

- To recognize that climate finance is a matter of justice, not charity. The Global North must scale up predictable, grant-based finance, fulfill their overdue promises, and work in partnership with Africa on a win-win basis. Such cooperation rooted in fairness, responsibility, delivery of commitments by developed countries, and mutual benefit will allow Africa to build resilience, and humanity as a whole to safeguard creation for current and future generations.
- Deliver on the COP 26 doubling adaptation finance commitment and set a new and more ambitious adaptation finance target

4.0 Faith Statement on Emissions Reduction, Just Energy Transition and Energy Justice

We *call upon all* world leaders, particularly the heads of states of most advanced economies, that alone are responsible for more than 75% of global emissions, to set more ambitious emission reduction targets before COP 30, targets that operationalize COP 28 Global Stocktake energy targets. This is a prerequisite to maintain the 1.5-degree guardrail acknowledging that it is unjust to both people and the planet to backtrack emission reduction efforts.

We affirm that the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy must be just, fair, and inclusive. It must not abandon the workers and communities whose livelihoods depend on coal, oil, and other fossil fuel industries. From the coal regions of South Africa to the oil-producing areas of Nigeria and beyond, the shift to clean energy must uphold dignity, create new opportunities, and build resilience.

At the same time, we recognize that access to energy remains one of the most fundamental challenges facing the African continent, even after decades of extracting strategic resources that were meant to transform its future. Energy must serve the people, not exploit them, and Africa's transition must be built on justice, equity, and sustainability.

Therefore, it is crucial that the International community and African governments *prioritize advancing a just transition* to enable economy and sectoral wide systemic change to deliver the ambition of a safe, emission-free, equitable and rights-based shift to green and sustainable economies. Stakeholder inclusion must underpin this engagement.

Therefore, we call on African leaders, the Africa Climate Summit, and COP30 to:

- Adopt a global Just Energy Transition framework that is adequately financed and centered on people.
- Ensure dedicated funding for green jobs, skills training, and community empowerment.
- Guarantee that renewable energy access reaches Africa's poorest and most vulnerable communities in particular women, youth, persons with disability
- Integrate Just Energy Transition into the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) and the Article 2.1 C operationalization so Africa and the Global South secure the resources required for an equitable transition, sustainable, and climate-resilient future.
- Operationalize a fair and just transition to clean, renewable energy systems that are affordable, efficient, and accessible to all communities.
- Support efforts to expand renewable energy including decentralized power systems for Africa's energy sovereignty

- We further call on major emitters and all developed countries to lead the divestment from fossil fuel energy sources, transition away from fossil fuels, and provide actionable Just Energy Transition finance packages that are fair and respond to realities of vulnerable African economies.

5.0 Food Sovereignty, Creation Care, and Community Resilience

We affirm that food is a sacred gift from God, and the land, water, and seeds that sustain life are entrusted to humanity as stewards, not exploiters. Priority must be given to protecting and scaling up indigenous and faith-rooted practices that have long safeguarded Africa's food systems and biodiversity. Sacred practices such as those in Ethiopian Church Forests, agroecological methods in various countries, Maasai pastoralism in Kenya and Tanzania, traditional seed systems in Mali and Niger, and faith-based conservation initiatives in Nigeria and South Africa and the prophetic voice of faith leaders that is integrating climate adaptation in messages in pastoralism in Uganda, all demonstrate how spirituality, tradition, and ecology can work together to sustain communities and creation. These practices not only feed people but also preserve biodiversity, enhance resilience, and ensure food security for future generations.

- Therefore, we call on African leaders at the Africa Climate Summit and on global leaders at COP30 to:
- Give priority to policies and financing that protect and expand indigenous and faith-rooted practices such as the Ethiopian Church Forests, alongside other traditional models of stewardship.
- Finance and invest in African agrifood systems and approaches such as agroecology and community-based systems that strengthen, soil health, biodiversity and resilience while securing food sovereignty.
- Strengthen African food value chains and protect the integrity of local food systems including seeds and preserving the right of communities to ownership and protection from extractive models of development. from the encroachment of industrial agriculture and
- Prioritize, including in financial arrangements, women, youth, Persons with Disability, indigenous and local communities who are the principal custodians of seeds, soils, forests, and farming knowledge in Africa and avail context responsive approaches to adaptation in the agriculture.
- Build capacity and provide finance to Small Scale Community farmers through right policies.

By giving priority to food sovereignty, African agrifood systems and approaches such as agroecology, and faith-rooted practices can foster resilience, and witness to the world a sustainable path rooted in justice, dignity, spirituality, and care for creation.

6.0 Tackling the persistent adaptation gap

Africa has become a victim of deadly floods, droughts and cyclones due to global warming. The frequency and intensity of climate impacts overrun ecological, social and structural systems with sheer and unprecedented consequences on the African people. Hard-won development gains are backtracked with inequalities getting deeply entrenched by the day and human dignity starkly compromised.

The urgency of supporting communities in climate distress and peril must predicate global action including through multi-stakeholder partnerships to facilitate evidence-based adaptation actions and resilience building galvanized by innovative policy and financing strategies in Africa

Therefore:

- We call on African leaders at the Africa Climate Summit and on global leaders at COP30 to ensure delivery of a set of the Global Goal on Adaptation indicators that include provision, mobilization and delivery of Means of Implementation in particular finance.
- We call on African leaders to prioritize design and development of financing arrangements that respond to the unique nature of the adaptation finance gap in Africa and deliver grant-based financing.
- We call on African governments to prioritize costing and mainstreaming climate risks into development and economic planning in a manner that ascertains Africa addresses barriers to unlocking adaptation finance at scale

7.0 Advancing Loss and Damage efforts

Ongoing efforts by actors in Africa to strengthen early warning systems is notable. However, much needs to be done to building comprehensive and affordable disaster risk management, including prevention and mitigation, disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness, climate - induced mobility, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction in view of climate disasters.

The challenge at hand is one of great magnitude.

We call upon African governments to

- Invest in institutional and structural fitness to respond to Loss and Damage by buttressing Africa's capabilities in coordination, developing responsive programming
- Enhance, in cooperation with financial actors such as Multilateral Development Banks, efforts to integrate climate risk in a manner that unlocks finance at scale for recovery and reconstruction that remains under-addressed
- Pursue arrangements such as Climate Resilient Debt Pause (and cancellation) Clauses that offer post-disaster relief
- Pursue funding from the Loss and Damage Fund including direct budget support and community livelihood support through Non-State Actors engagement.

Accordingly, *we call upon **developed countries*** to deliver loss and damage finance.

We call for a prompt operationalization of the Community access window of the Fund for addressing Loss and Damage

We commit to building a nuanced shared learning and experience exchange process among African actors to share lessons in research, policy and practice and to build interlinkages regarding Loss and Damage, disaster risk reduction and risk management, including emergency preparedness and recovery efforts.

8.0 Youth, Women, People with disability and Interfaith Solidarity

We affirm that women, youth, people with disability, and interfaith communities are at the heart of Africa's resilience. From Kenya's pastoralist women and youth to Ethiopia's smallholder farmers, from fisherfolk in Senegal to women seed keepers in Mali, from young climate activists in Uganda to pastoralist youth in Somalia, they bear the heaviest burdens of climate change while also leading many of the most creative and effective local solutions. Yet their contributions remain under-recognized, underfunded, and excluded from decision-making spaces. As people of faith, we declare that justice requires placing women and youth at the center of climate action, equipping them with resources, leadership roles, and direct finance to expand their transformative work.

We emphasize that African women and girls remain most affected by climate change in Africa which exposes them to diverse vulnerabilities and call upon accelerated intentionally focused action in capacity building, technology transfer climate finance towards adaptive capacities, enhance their resilience and deliver climate change interventions that restore their ability and

potential to lead and support the Africa's growth and development. Focusing on women & girls can accelerate action & ensure stability

We affirm that youth engagement must go beyond participation to decision making, and support, in particular finance, to facilitate design and implementation of youth led climate solutions that unlock climate and green jobs.

We also affirm that interfaith solidarity is a moral force for climate justice. From Islamic environmental initiatives in Mali, to Christian-led reforestation in Nigeria, interfaith peace and land restoration in South Sudan, and multi-faith conservation networks in South Africa, religious communities are modeling shared responsibility for creation across boundaries of faith.

We renew our resolve to , in working with communities, develop fit-for-purpose models and respond to adaptation needs in a manner that enhances local institutional and individual adaptive capacity with inclusion of gender and human rights underpinning design and implementation of adaptation actions.

Additionally, *we commit to* building nuanced shared learning and experience exchange processes among African actors. This will enable the sharing of adaptation and resilience lessons in research, policy and practice.

Therefore, we call upon African leaders, the Africa Climate Summit, COP30, and national governments to:

- Adopt a concrete Plan of Action with robust policy and regulatory measures to advance inclusive green economies that provide sustainable jobs for youth, women, and people with disability.
- Support research and innovation that promote greener economic diversification, resilience, and growth that responds to the needs of these groups.
- Initiate strategies that create affordable and accessible financial solutions for youth-led green enterprises, including by leveraging climate finance.
- Provide dedicated funding and policies that strengthen the leadership of women, youth, people with disability, and interfaith alliances at every level of climate action.

Conclusion

By responding to these calls, Africa can build a future that is just, resilient, and rooted in both moral conviction and practical action. This requires uniting faith, policy, and community voices

The logo for actalliance, with 'act' in red and 'alliance' in black.

to ensure that climate adaptation is not only ambitious but also inclusive reaching the most fragile regions, uplifting marginalized groups, and safeguarding the dignity of all people. In doing so, Africa can set a global example of how justice and resilience go hand in hand in shaping a sustainable future.

We hereby agree that an informal Interfaith Joint Team¹ shall track the implementation of the calls and commitments under this declaration.

END

¹ Organizers of the ACS II Faith Consultation shall cooperate with all faith actors to track the commitments and pursuance of calls under this Declaration.