

**Declaration  
of the  
African Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Climate  
Change  
convened by ACT Alliance  
17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

## Introduction

**Action by Churches Together (ACT Alliance)** is a coalition of more than 140 churches and church-related organisations working together in over 120 countries to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalised people regardless of their religion, politics, gender, race, or nationality in keeping with the highest international codes and standards. ACT Alliance is faith-motivated, rights-based, impact focused, committed to working ecumenically and inter-religiously, with the communities we seek to serve and accompany at the centre of our work.

**ACT Alliance** convened an African Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Climate Change on the 17- 19<sup>th</sup> August 2021. Graced by 94 participants, the consultation was inspired by fruitful exchanges and deep reflections.

### The double pandemic and climate crisis

The world is currently facing an immense pandemic catastrophe coming on top of a deep climate crisis that have far-reaching implications for humanity, economy, and nature. The double COVID-19 and climate crisis demonstrates how life which we view as 'the normal' can be altered tremendously within a very short period.

Both crises share two unique commonalities – they ravage, disrupt, and weaken fundamental systems that serve as lifelines for communities, and they relentlessly reveal great and deeply disturbing inequity between rich and poor nations. Although the consequences of this double crisis are catastrophic for entire societies, it is once again the poor and marginalised who suffer the most.

### Africa's climate change burden

Climate change is having numerous effects on the African continent. Despite contributing least to the climate crisis, Africa stands as the most vulnerable world region due to multiple stressors and low adaptive capacity. Impacts such as extreme weather events like floods and droughts rampant in the region are causing significant economic losses while disproportionately burdening vulnerable communities.

Climate change is halting economic growth and well-being of African countries with reduced living standards and economies that increasingly struggle to foot the climate change bill. The latter compromises on the ability of African nations to

comprehensively respond to the climate crisis. Disappointingly, the urgency of African governments to act on climate is normally crippled by inadequate capacity and low engagement in climate diplomacy, finance and by systemic inadequacies.

## **Tackling climate change in Africa - The principle and moral imperative**

**We unanimously share the conviction, as a matter of principle,** that a continent with such a level of demonstrated enhanced climate ambition within the already 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.

*While underscoring* the complex reality of vulnerability and risk posed by the existential climate change threat that Africa finds itself in, **we call for** revitalized effort by the community of nations to strengthen Africa's climate action urgency in adapting to climate impacts, leveraging climate finance to drive real, and impactful climate solutions, and centring gender and youth inclusion at the heart of climate policy and action. Additionally, we implore national non-state actors to enhance their climate justice advocacy efforts targeting governments. This should be complemented with provision of innovative policy ideas and strategies and non-state actor-led impactful climate change programming.

It is imperative that Africa's leadership props up the region's climate engagement strategy including in the run up to Glasgow - COP 26 and the Africa COP 27 in 2022 with the sole aim of onboarding Africa's voices, realities, lessons, and experiences in the global climate policy process to deliver benefits for Africa in the fight against climate change.

**A moral impetus** exists to: provide true leadership, tackle systemic and structural inadequacies that weaken our fight against climate change at national and regional level, foster authentic dialogue on tackling climate change, forge and leverage multi-stakeholder partnerships for scaled-up climate action, elevate the place of multidimensional social inclusion in climate resilient and sustainable development,

respond to the needs and voices of climate change frontline communities, women and youth, and drive evidence-based impactful real and life-changing climate solutions.

## Thematic focused declarations

### a. Enhancing deep emission reduction cuts and advancing just transition

Stark scientific evidence shown in the just released IPCC report<sup>1</sup> reveals an unacceptably high risk of a hazy future, characterized by dozens of climate change effects if global emissions are not, by 2030 which is less than 10 years now, almost halved to 22 -30 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e to avoid overshooting the 1.5°C temperature threshold<sup>2</sup>, which is firmly anchored in the Paris Agreement.

It is sinful to continue destroying the climate system.

As such, **we call upon all** world leaders, but particularly the heads of states of the 20 most advanced economies (G20), that alone are responsible for more than 75% of global emissions, to set more ambitious emission reduction targets before COP 26 in Glasgow. This is a prerequisite to avert the possible 3 degrees warming pathway based on the current set of NDC commitments submitted to the UNFCCC secretariat, and to maintain the 1.5-degree target within reach. It is unjust to both people and the planet to walk on a compromised 1.5-degree guardrail and acting expeditiously has never been this urgent.

Within the African context, avoiding emissions that would evidently contribute to global warming as the region develops, is a priority. This in turn demands that the region prioritizes and is supported by rich nations to embark on preserving carbon sinks such as natural forest ecosystems as well as transitioning its energy-, transport-, food-, waste management- and industrial systems, as well as infrastructure and cities to green and clean options. This is to avoid locking in emissions.

Therefore, it is crucial that 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

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<sup>1</sup> IPCC AR6, 2021

<sup>2</sup> UNEP Emission Gap Report, 2019

## b. 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 and resilience building galvanized by innovative policy and financing strategies.

Climate finance has an intricate role to play in closing the adaptation gap. For a region whose nations commit about 2-9% of their GDP to tackling extreme weather events, adaptation finance is imperative. Africa together with the other regions of the Global South are set to shoulder sharply rising adaptation costs of between USD 140-300 billion per year until 2030 and USD 280-500 billion until 2050 respectively.<sup>3</sup> Thus, rapidly scaling up and delivery of adaptation finance is not only urgent but a lifeline.

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 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.

Consequently, **we call upon** developed nations and other wealthy nations, as most oil-exporting countries, to deliver ambitious grant-based adaptation finance commitments in the upcoming COP 26 with an overarching adaptation finance goal and include plans to ramp up effort in providing this finance up to 2025. In the years to come, all G20 nations should gradually contribute to delivering adaptation finance to the most vulnerable countries, i.e. least developed countries, small island developing states, and African nations.

**We renew our resolve to** work with communities to prioritize, develop fit-for-purpose models and respond to adaptation needs in a manner that enhances local

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<sup>3</sup> UNEP Adaptation Gap report, 2020

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.

### **c. Advancing Loss and Damage efforts**

Some impacts of climate change go beyond adaptation and cause significant Loss and Damage in African societies. Loss and Damage associated with sudden and slow onset events degrade ecosystems, destroy infrastructure, cause death, destroy livelihoods, significantly drive migration and displacement. Combined, they have extensive economic and non-economic repercussions.

Ongoing efforts by actors in Africa to strengthen early warning systems, and building up comprehensive and affordable disaster risk management, including prevention and mitigation, disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness, response, and rehabilitation in view of climate disasters, are notable. However, much remains to be done particularly in addressing climate induced migration and displacement based on a human rights approach.

The challenge at hand is one of great magnitude and demands propping up effort and investing in buttressing Africa's capabilities in averting and minimizing associated Loss and Damage risks. Out of respect for the sanctity of all life, protection of lives, livelihoods and nature from Loss and Damage must be accorded significant effort.

Accordingly, *we **call upon*** world leaders to find an amicable solution to the ever-contentious question of financing Loss and Damage in COP 26. New and additional finance for Loss and Damage with its own accountability and reporting channels is a prerequisite to avert, minimize, address, and compensate for Loss and Damage.

***We decide*** that we will build 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 response.

We note that much needs to be done in the area of climate induced migration and displacement. As such *we **urge*** the faith community, civil society, governments, and

international agencies to amplify efforts and deepen their engagement in this area to safeguard peoples' rights, dignity, and well-being.

#### **d. Settling the long-due contentious climate finance issues**

In spite of finance being an enabler and pre-requisite for climate action, it has consistently been a point of divergence among nations at the UNFCCC. At the heart of the divergence lies the question of provision of finance by developed nations and just how much-needed finance by vulnerable and poor regions has not been as forthcoming.

There are ongoing African countries' own domestic finance mobilization efforts by governments, faith community, civil society, and community groups to foot the climate change bill. This is despite myriad limitations and competing development challenges in this region. However, these efforts by far fall short of climate finance needed to tackle the climate problem and must be extensively complimented. Equally, accessing climate finance is a daunting task for many African countries.

**We implore** governments to re-invigorate efforts and trust in settling contentious climate finance issues for a concrete COP 26 climate finance outcome that clearly defines climate finance and agrees on common accounting and reporting modalities, delivers ambitious and scaled-up finance commitments at COP 26, settles the urgency for new and additional finance for loss and damage, and presents an actionable follow-through plan on taking stock of and delivery of the USD 100B<sup>4</sup> commitment by 2025. By 2025, rich nations should contribute their fair share to mobilize the climate finance needed in the Global South. COP 26 should also deliver a resolve on how to enable vulnerable nations to overcome hurdles to access finance.

**We commit to** advocating for the repurposing of the global finance architecture to respond to climate needs of vulnerable countries and to advance relevant work in climate finance disclosures, and climate risk reporting by financial institutions.

**We further devote ourselves to** extensive national level climate finance policy engagement and capacity development. This is to ensure that African nations have sound climate finance policies - fit for present and future climate needs – and are by all means invested in building bankable project pipelines to access finance.

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<sup>4</sup> A Copenhagen Accord COP 15 2009 commitment by developed countries to jointly mobilizing USD 100 billion a year until 2020 to address developing countries' climate needs

**e. Repurposing our development model for a climate aligned and resilient green recovery**

COVID-19 with its far-reaching implications has presented a rare opportunity for humanity to re-think, reimagine and remodel economic development. Despite the turmoil caused by the pandemic, this once in a life-time opportunity to entrench climate action and sustainability in our development cannot be missed.

Bouncing back from the pandemic is the task at hand. It requires ethical and strong leadership, political foresight, inclusion, systems change, and structural transformation if it is to deliver green recovery and sustainable development.

Therefore, **we resolve to** advance- a green, climate aligned and resilient recovery for a sustainable future with inherent triple dividends of stable economies, creation care and environmental regeneration, and meaningful inclusive growth. Our engagement in the recovery discourse must seek to ensure that No One is Left Behind, and uphold a rights-based approach, what is just and equitable is upheld

Further, **we commit to** forging partnerships that facilitate the co-creation of innovative national, regional, and global policy advocacy efforts and strategies that hold benefit for frontline and marginalized communities in climate justice, green recovery, and sustainable development.

**We urge** governments to shun emission intensive and inequitable business as usual development pathways in this recovery and reconstruction era. Such approaches contradict the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. Instead, we urge governments to pursue deep emission cuts, advance renewable energy including for energy poor rural populations; and support green production and livelihood systems that are in harmony with climate and nature.

*End*