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ACT climate justice advocacy framework

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COVER PHOTO: A man walks along a sidewalk in Kuala Bubon, in Indonesia's Aceh province. The community of 118 houses was built by the ACT Alliance after the village's tsunami survivors refused to accept government plans to relocate them inland far from the sea. After the houses were built, the community then successfully fought a government plan to demolish part of the new village to make way for a new highway. CREDIT: PAUL JEFFREY/ACT ALLIANCE

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1 Purpose

Climate justice is one of five thematic and programmatic priorities identified in ACT Alliance's Global Strategy (2019–2026). The ACT Climate Change Advocacy Framework Position outlines the general vision and direction of ACT's climate change advocacy, campaign and political priorities. This document is to be utilised by ACT Forums and members in their own advocacy at national and regional levels, and for international advocacy conducted as an alliance.

2 Background

ACT Alliance considers climate change a threat to all of Creation. As a faith-based alliance, we believe we have been given the responsibility to care for Creation – a task we must shoulder with great seriousness. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has confirmed that climate change is indeed a reality and a threat multiplier, and is primarily caused by human actions.

Scientific research shows rising temperatures and sea levels, biodiversity loss and resulting changes in ecosystems. Further changes in the climate will lead to more severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts. In addition to already prevalent droughts, floods, extreme weather events and wildfires, the lives and livelihoods of communities across the world, in particular Indigenous communities, are threatened.

The 2015 Paris Agreement and other decisions from the 21st yearly session of the Conference of the Parties – known as COP21 – to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, are landmarks in international climate change governance, as they set the agenda for climate policy and action for years to come. Keeping the global temperature rise to well below 2°C (while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C), combined with goals to shift trillions of dollars in investments towards more resilient and low greenhouse gas emission development, signal the urgent need for climate action. The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and the pledge to leave no one behind, further call for action from a wide variety of sectors towards more sustainable economies and livelihoods.

For ACT Alliance, the fight against climate change is a fight for justice. Research has unveiled inequalities between and within countries. Poor and vulnerable communities, as well as marginalised groups – including women, people of other genders and youth – are disproportionately affected by climate change despite their minimal contribution to it.

ACT Alliance believes that equity and climate justice must be a core element of the climate debate, and that historical responsibilities should be acknowledged and acted upon. Furthermore, ACT recognises that climate change is a threat multiplier and has implications for the Sustainable Development Goals, thus further exacerbating inequalities.

ACT Alliance members and Forums continue to advocate for climate justice, particularly to support community resilience in developing countries, access to clean energy, just transitions, low greenhouse gas emission development, a people-centred approach to climate-induced displacement, and full implementation of the Paris Agreement, guided by the principles of equity, human rights and gender justice.

ACT Alliance also recognises the threats and challenges associated with the global COVID-19 pandemic, which added to the ongoing climate crisis, further burdening countries, communities and people around the world. Adequate responses to COVID-19 are needed to manage the spread of the disease. ACT encourages governments to tackle both COVID-19 and the climate crisis, and to align measures to handle the pandemic with efforts against climate change.

3 Values and Principles

ACT Alliance's climate change advocacy and campaign work is grounded in the Christian faith. We believe that every life is God-given, and that all forms of Creation have intrinsic value worthy of dignity and respect. ACT's climate justice agenda affirms the stewardship of Creation and acknowledges that care for the environment and ecosystems is tied to humanity's survival, resilience and sustainability. Climate change impacts on ecosystems and species must be addressed while negotiating climate actions, financing and justice. That these ecosystems and species have no voice make it the duty of ACT, its members, and other faith communities to be their voice.

ACT Alliance will continue to work with churches and other faith actors to ensure that the spiritual and moral voices of the poor, marginalised and oppressed are heard, and that their power to transform beliefs and behaviours are fully considered. ACT will represent those who have voice and those who have not, including future generations and non-human creations of God.

We live in a globalised world with manifold risks and great opportunities for transformational change towards a future in which all people, irrespective of gender, age or origin, contribute to a sustainable society, enjoy their rights and live a dignified life. Equity, human rights and gender justice, as well as transparency, inclusion and accountability of action and support, are key pillars of our advocacy and campaign work. We understand that climate change is only a symptom of deeply embedded structural problems such as those connected to our current economic system.¹

ACT Alliance will continue to build on our firm beliefs and achievements. We will mobilise our unique global network, intensify our ecumenical and interfaith partnerships, and engage the increasing climate awareness of faith leaders and communities. While influencing governments in the Global North and South, and helping the numerous parties in the climate change negotiations and debates reach agreements necessary to safely sustain life, ACT will uphold strongly the following principles:

¹ See more at [ACT-Alliance-Briefing-Paper-The-Intersectionalities-of-Gender-Justice-and-Economic-Justice-Nov-2022.pdf](#) (actalliance.org).

1. Polluter pays: Those who cause climate change, both currently and historically, must pay for the cost of their pollution impacts and cleaning costs, proportionately.
2. Common and differentiated responsibilities: Countries, populations, companies and communities that have contributed to climate change must be responsible for their fair share of mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage compensation – and do so in proportions equal to their responsibilities.
3. Common and differentiated vulnerabilities and capacities: Countries, communities and populations are all affected by climate change, but the severity of impacts and levels of vulnerability vary. Victims of climate change should receive support for mitigation, adaptation and loss, and compensatory damages based on the severity of impacts they face and their level of vulnerability. To stay within the 1.5°C temperature rise established in the Paris Agreement, scaled-up climate finance must be delivered to enable Global South countries to meet their goals and continue to develop in a green and sustainable manner.
4. Climate finance is an obligation, not charity. It must not generate further debt. Climate finance is not “aid” from the rich to the poor or from the “developed” to the “underdeveloped,” or from the Global North to the Global South. It is a right of countries, populations and communities that suffer from climate change to claim resources to redress the damages caused by its main contributors .
5. Climate change mitigation is the duty of all nations, populations and communities that have contributed to climate change. They have the right to develop and prosper, but in a safe and sustainable manner.
6. At the centre of the climate problem are unsustainable and profit-driven economic systems, production and consumption. The world must transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient and sustainable development in a just, inclusive and equitable way.
7. Injustices within nations and communities against various sub-groups and communities are impediments to meaningful climate justice.
8. Colonisation’s horrendous historical contribution to climate change should be acknowledged. It is equally important to recognise the reality of new forms of colonisation and oppression, even if formal relations between countries have changed. The rights of people and nations must be respected, and power relations that prevent climate justice should end. As oppression and exploitation are never acceptable, efforts should be made to repair wrongs of the past and ensure equal partnerships, particularly regarding climate action.

Ambitious policy and action at the national level are central to ACT Alliance’s advocacy agenda. The Paris Agreement commits all parties to review their [Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#) and action plans to mitigate global warming for 2021 to 2025. Parties are also required to develop [Long Term decarbonisation Strategies \(LTS\)](#). Scientific findings have repeatedly revealed gaps between existing climate commitments and needed levels of action. The NDC update and LTS processes give countries an opportunity to put climate resilience and low greenhouse gas development at the heart of the public debate, while galvanising support for long-term structural changes to create a more climate-resilient society.

The Paris Agreement’s objectives can be achieved only through international cooperation. Innovative and pioneering alliances are needed to achieve such cooperation.

4 Human Rights and Gender

As global average temperatures continue to rise, the world's most marginalised communities remain disproportionately affected, in both developing and developed countries. In many places, low incomes coincide with marginalisation or discrimination by racial or ethnic identity, geographical location or origin, gender, age, ability, religious or other factors. Amongst the most climate-vulnerable are women, children, Indigenous and local communities, differently abled and elderly people, and economically marginalised groups. While these communities contribute little to climate change, they face the highest burdens and are often left out of climate change policy- and decision-making.

Achieving climate justice requires identifying and challenging the root causes of climate change. Climate justice recognises historical relations between the Global North and the Global South. Their contributions to climate change are not equal – and neither are the impacts. Achieving climate justice requires industrialised countries to respond to their historical responsibilities, and to mobilise and transfer resources, technologies and finance to the most vulnerable countries to enable them to adapt, mitigate and counter loss and damage. Equally, climate justice will not be achieved without tackling structural issues related to our deeply unbalanced and unsustainable global economic system.

ACT Alliance and the global faith community recognise that only multiple strategies can address these injustices:

- Climate change affects impoverished and marginalised groups and developing countries first and disproportionately.
- Polluters do not provide enough support and resources to the most vulnerable.
- Those most affected by climate change tend to have the least political power and influence. Global economic governance and decision-making lie largely in the hands of rich countries.

Climate justice requires advocating for long-term solutions to alleviate the increasing burdens on vulnerable groups, given historical responsibilities. ACT Alliance calls for solutions that are inclusive, participatory, human-rights-based, gender-sensitive and accountable to climate-vulnerable communities.

Some advocates using outdated and inaccurate information call for family planning and population control to curb carbon emissions. Yet the bulk of population growth is in the developing world, where many countries still have a negligible carbon footprint. The source of the problem is unsustainable development, an economic system that values profit over people and planet, and irresponsible consumption of natural resources.

The Paris Agreement recognises that measures to promote gender equality and empowerment of women should be accountable. ACT Alliance recognises that women, in all their diversity, are disproportionately affected by climate change, particularly where gender inequalities are more pronounced. Women tend to be excluded from owning property and productive resources, or are confined to the home with

responsibility for resource management (water and energy). As these roles and responsibilities are typically outside the formal economy and spheres of political influence, women's specific vulnerabilities are often overlooked.

To make the existing development pathway more sustainable, women, youth and marginalised groups must participate equally in decisions and processes. Women and youth, in all their diversity, play an important role as agents of change. Thus, gender-specific vulnerabilities must be recognised and inclusive participation must be at the heart of climate discussions and across all levels of decision-making.

ACT Alliance's advocacy on gender and human rights in relation to climate change will focus on the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan as a tool to integrate gender perspectives in all climate-change policy and interventions under the Paris Agreement. ACT will also work to mainstream gender and human rights in other aspects of the Paris Agreement.

5 Community Resilience

Climate change impacts on communities and the natural environment are becoming more frequent and intense, disrupting and destroying water, food and livelihoods. ACT Alliance prioritises the dignity and resilience of communities in developing countries that are already affected by climate change, and whose capacities to adapt and respond are limited. Strengthening communities' adaptive capacity and resilience must be comprehensive and rights-based.

ACT Alliance's focus on community resilience promotes policy and practice on adaptation, loss and damage, climate-induced displacement, land rights, climate-resilient agriculture and food systems, protecting smallholder farmers, and halting and reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss.

5.1 | Adaptation

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change states that adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change is a vital climate response measure, and is pivotal for sustainable development. This is further acknowledged in the Paris Agreement:

Parties recognise that adaptation is a global challenge faced by all with local, subnational, national, regional and international dimensions and that it is a key component of, and makes a contribution to the long-term global response to climate change to protect people, livelihoods and ecosystems, taking into account the urgent and immediate needs of those developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

Successful adaptation depends on a multiplicity of actions that address vulnerability and build capacities among diverse stakeholders, with governments taking the lead while ensuring active and sustained

engagement of others, including civil society and communities. The Cancun Adaptation Framework will continue to play an important role in policy, practice and enhanced cooperative action. To be effective, climate adaptation plans must include community concerns and participation. Adaptation plans should consider the impacts of climate change on ecosystems and species beyond human.

ACT Alliance's advocacy and campaign efforts will emphasise adaptation as a key pillar for climate action, including enhanced means of implementation (technology, finance and capacity-building). Adaptation must have equal standing with mitigation and must receive balanced treatment and resourcing. ACT will also focus on the Global Goal on Adaptation to ensure that the principles of justice, accountability and equity are upheld.

National Adaptation Plans are key instruments to plan, implement and measure adaptation actions. They should incorporate a rights-based approach and promote locally led adaptation, ensuring equal opportunity for all stakeholders to participate. These plans should also address the underlying causes of the specific vulnerabilities of women and men, boys and girls, in all their diversity, and their respective practical needs and strategic interests. They should ensure that natural resources and ecosystems are protected.

Adaptation plans should consider how locally available resources and traditional knowledge can be applied in any given location. Importantly, implementation should be accompanied by adequate financial support to effectively translate plan commitments into actions. Parties must submit and periodically update their adaptation communications, in line with Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, to ensure international accountability and to track progress.

ACT Alliance acknowledges a wide variety of adaptation solutions and welcomes initiatives to mainstream adaptation into broader development initiatives. Ecosystem-based and locally led adaptation can be integrated with local development plans. In fragile communities, adaptation measures must be conflict-sensitive to promote peacebuilding, rather than to fuel conflict.

Additionally, human mobility can be an adaptation and risk-reduction strategy, if human and social rights are protected and if movement is voluntary, safe and orderly. This was confirmed in the [Sixth IPCC Assessment Report on Vulnerability and Adaptation](#). However, international protection and freedom to move remain severely restricted. Lack of regular pathways for migration forces people to take life-threatening routes that expose them to human rights violations, labour exploitation and gender-based violence, among other threats. Planned relocation processes are often accompanied by non-economic loss and damage and human rights violations, including of economic and cultural rights. Internal displacement is not sufficiently addressed and lacks financial resources and institutional capacities. Tailored solutions are necessary to respond to the needs of affected populations, especially people living in vulnerable situations. They must not be left behind.

ACT Alliance will engage with the structures and processes mandated to deal with adaptation, including the Adaptation Committee, Nairobi Work Programme, Green Climate Fund, Least Developed Countries Expert Group and others.

5.2. | Loss and damage

Climate-induced loss and damage is already a reality for people around the world. While global temperatures rise, the risk of climate-related disasters, and related loss and damage, increases. The Paris Agreement identifies addressing loss and damage as the third pillar of necessary climate action, with mitigation and adaptation being the other two. ACT Alliance interprets “loss and damage” as a stand-alone concept, covering activities to address climate change impacts that adaptation cannot address. The discussion of loss and damage is focused on activities initiated during and after an event.

Loss and damage refers both to slow and rapid onset disasters, and to economic and non-economic effects. It includes small-scale loss and damage, which threatens local communities and households, and large-scale events, which can threaten national economies, regional stability and even states. There is also a direct link to mobility, as people and communities may be displaced and forced to resettle in new locations or migrate to other countries.

ACT Alliance believes that states should address mobility-related gaps in national planning on adaptation, disaster risk reduction and loss and damage.² They should scale up their ambition to fulfil mitigation, adaptation, loss-and-damage and finance commitments. Stakeholders should include human mobility more effectively in UNFCCC processes. This can be done by strengthening existing international initiatives and including loss-and-damage recommendations from the Advisory Group report [“Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change”](#).

Additional financial resources and capacity to address loss and damage are urgently required. Also necessary is enhanced interconnection and efficiency between disaster risk reduction, humanitarian response, sustainable development and governance. Loss-and-damage finance is a right for those affected by climate change, and an obligatory duty on polluters who have contributed to climate change.

The COP27 decision to establish a fund and promote funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage offers hope. Vulnerable communities facing loss and damage must receive the necessary support and funding. Loss-and-damage finance must adhere to the principles of international cooperation and solidarity based on historical responsibility and the polluter-pays principle: needs-based, adequate, predictable and precautionary, public and grants-based, balanced, comprehensive and locally driven.

Based on the polluter-pays principle, governments should also consider measures such as wealth, carbon and windfall taxes, and levies on aviation and other activities to increase climate finance for loss and damage.

Insurance initiatives may play a role in addressing climate-related loss and damage, but they will never be enough, and only grant-based finance can address most loss and damage. It is equally important to ensure that insurance initiatives do not transfer large financial burdens to Global South countries by prioritising the interests of those managing insurance schemes.

² See the joint ACT Alliance and Bread for the World report entitled Addressing the Protection Gap - Human Mobility and the Climate Crisis in International Frameworks, 2023, in the Resources section.

The concept of loss and damage applies to many different situations. Activities and initiatives to address loss and damage will differ. Governments, public institutions, civil society and the private sector may all play a role. In all activities it will be important to consider gender, the need for local ownership, and the fulfilment of human rights. Initiatives to avert, minimise and address loss and damage through cooperation and sharing experiences, at a national level or through the international Santiago network, should be promoted.

ACT Alliance values the sanctity of life and the gifts of Creation. ACT calls on the community of nations prioritise a holistic approach to loss and damage that considers identity, culture and intangible community treasures. These are often lost when climate change forces people to migrate. Small island countries suffering substantial losses due to sea level rise need support and protection, as do communities experiencing slow onset effects.

6 Low Greenhouse Gas Emissions

In the Paris Agreement, states promised to lower their emissions of greenhouse gasses (GHG) by the second half of this century. Keeping the global temperature rise below 1.5°C requires an immense transition in the next few years.

Several positive signals indicate that a pathway to low GHG emissions is possible. For example, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognise interlinkages between climate change and sustainable development. SDG7, for instance, states the need to deliver universal energy access by 2030. The SDGs also note that climate change is a human rights issue. Keeping to 1.5° is essential to safeguard core human rights such as the right to health, clean environment, life, culture, food, housing, water and sanitation.³

Another example is evident in the Climate Vulnerable Forum, countries most vulnerable to climate change, which aim to achieve 100 percent domestic renewable energy production between 2030 and 2050 while ending energy poverty, protecting water resources and enhancing food security.

ACT Alliance strongly supports these commitments and encourages major historical and current greenhouse gas emitters to live up to theirs. ACT calls for scaled-up climate action in line with environmental integrity, pro-poor, gender-just, and rights-based solutions – without risks to communities or double-counting actions. ACT also warns against false solutions and artificial schemes to capture carbon that don't lower emissions.

ACT Alliance advocates enhanced national action to raise the ambition of five-year climate plans, phase out all fossil fuels, increase access to renewable energy and energy-efficient solutions for poor and

3 See more at OHCHR 2021. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2021/04/fact-sheet-unpacks-and-links-human-rights-and-climate-change>

vulnerable communities, and strengthen cooperation to facilitate mitigation and just, inclusive and equitable transitions. These efforts should be the basis of long-term GHG emission reduction strategies that factor in low-emission and climate-neutral economies. Development does not need to be polluting and unsustainable.

6.1 | National targets

Countries are required under the Paris Agreement to develop and communicate successively more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions. Additionally, countries should formulate and communicate long-term low-GHG strategies relevant to their national circumstances. To achieve the temperature goal, countries must ratchet up their national mitigation actions. Developed and high GHG-emitting countries must take the lead in economy-wide absolute emission reductions. Investment must shift away from fossil fuels towards diverse renewable energy sources, energy-efficient solutions and low-emitting production while preserving and strengthening natural carbon sinks. As countries have different pathways to development, national plans to reduce emissions will also differ.

Climate finance to enable poorer countries to implement a just energy transition or leapfrog to a clean and sustainable future – continuing their development while curbing emissions – is essential. Energy use must also transition. Transportation must be fuelled by renewables, and heating and cooling must become energy-efficient. Communal and public transportation should be prioritised over individual solutions; investments in industry, transport and tourism solutions should be a top priority for governments.

One of the biggest mitigation challenges is in agriculture and food production, where emissions must decrease while food production increases to feed a growing world population. Good practices, such as conservation agriculture, agroecology, agroforestry and other technologies, may facilitate part of this shift. However, changes in cultures and traditions will also be necessary. Food sovereignty should be part of a wider structural approach to systems change.

The use of land, forests and water also have implications for mitigation. Although these natural carbon sinks are affected by climate change, they have the potential to sequester carbon dioxide, and should therefore be preserved and protected. ACT Alliance acknowledges the important role and rights of Indigenous people who, in many countries, live in areas needing protection or where protection needs reinforcement and/or renewal.

ACT Alliance acknowledges that just transition⁴ has gained significant appreciation as a pathway to low-carbon development. COP27 changed the discourse focus from the workforce to an economy-wide issue requiring additional support. COP28 elevated just, equitable and inclusive transitions as an organising concept for implementing transitional pathways. Such transitions will affect economies, therefore requiring huge political will and finance for research and development to drive practical and dependable structural and systemic changes. However, current [Just Energy Transition Partnerships](#) already agreed

4 See more at “Living Planet” statement from WCC 11th Assembly seeks a just and sustainable global community | World Council of Churches (oikoumene.org), 2022, and 2018.

on, such as in South Africa and Indonesia, are not delivering as intended due to unresponsive financial structuring and in some cases total reliance on gas. Climate finance and wider finance flows provide opportunities for countries to accelerate the transition to low greenhouse gas across all sectors while ensuring sustainable energy for all. Public finances and policies should stimulate a shift of trillions of dollars in the coming decades towards low-carbon, zero-carbon and resilient investments.

6.2 | Renewable energy

Lack of access to clean, modern energy hinders economic development and reinforces inequalities. It deprives those living in poverty from opportunities to improve productivity and their quality of life. SDG7 aims to “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable modern energy for all” by providing universal energy access, doubling renewables’ share of energy, and improving energy efficiency by 2030. Governments from 106 countries and the European Union have partnered with the Sustainable Energy for All initiative (SE4All). ACT Alliance will encourage countries that haven’t signed up to SE4All to do so and support its vision of making sustainable energy for all a reality by 2030.

Fossil fuel subsidies must be removed. Financing must be channelled towards the needs of the most vulnerable, particularly to people living in poverty, to enable them to improve their lives while increasing domestic demand for renewable energy technologies.

Clean energy can be made available to people living in energy poverty, that is, lacking adequate, affordable, reliable, quality, safe and environmentally sound energy services that support development. Deploying decentralised renewable energy systems holds massive potential for marginalised and rural communities. This may provide an opportunity for better education and a reduced workload (particularly for women) and may stimulate innovation and enterprise. Today’s predominant development model relies heavily on fossil fuels and centralised generation, starkly contradicting the goal of keeping the global temperature rise to below 2°C, let alone 1.5°C. The move away from fossil fuels must be just, protecting workers as they transfer to low-carbon, sustainable jobs, and supporting economies that suffer as they transition.

Decentralising renewable energy generation also improves the chances of making modern energy services accessible to people living in poverty. It can enhance the influence of women and men in local communities through management of energy generation and distribution while offering opportunities for more productive energy uses.

Energy policies need to promote sustainable development, considering inter alia the appropriateness of technologies to the environment and society. Decentralised energy production should be emphasised, focusing on local development needs and interests identified by communities.

Finally, transforming energy systems to be secure, accessible, reliable and resilient would tackle energy poverty. ACT emphasises just energy transition to accelerate shifts to renewable energy. Export-oriented large-scale renewable energy projects that displace communities are not a solution to the energy and climate crisis.

6.3 | Raising ambition

Global ambitions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions must be increased. ACT Alliance calls on all parties to develop and implement national plans aligned with the 1.5°C target. When the Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015, the combined impact of the Nationally Determined Contributions was anticipated to lead to at least 2.7°C of warming during this century, which risks catastrophic climate change.

Scaling up ambitions requires action at national, subnational, community and individual levels. Countries will have to make fair and equitable contributions towards delivering the Paris commitments through climate finance and reducing domestic emissions. Developing countries will require investments and climate finance to meet their commitments.

The Paris Agreement includes an “ambition mechanism” designed to help parties scale up their national plans every five years. The process includes several steps in which parties submit their plans and jointly take stock of the progress on the elements of the Paris Agreement.

It is therefore essential for countries to foster the political and investment conditions necessary to ratchet up their NDCs. Transformational change will require addressing the driving forces behind climate change – including unequal access to resources and influence over decision-making.

Financial flows must enable this transition so that people living in vulnerable conditions are supported and compensated. At the same time, financial flows need to be tracked to ensure that needed financial resources are available to governments planning their investments and delivery of ambitious national climate plans.

7 Implementation

Implementing adaptation measures, resilience to climate change and low greenhouse gas development requires climate finance, technology and capacity-building. Ambitious climate action in developing countries depends on adequate and predictable support – including finance, capacity-building, and technology transfer – from developed countries. The voices of those most affected must be included in any outcomes or decisions, and the dignity of all must be respected and maintained.

International cooperation to deliver ambitious climate action at all levels must incorporate an accessible process in accordance with the principles of the Framework Convention and the Paris Agreement.

7.1 | Climate finance

Successful implementation of the Paris Agreement depends heavily on reliable, long-term and transparent flows of international public climate finance. Meeting the global need for a green transformation, sustainable development, and safe and secure lives for all requires a huge mobilisation of financial resources. While climate finance continues to be mobilised and reported on, what constitutes it is not

formally defined, allowing considerable flexibility in what countries count. In any case, the amount devoted to climate finance is only a drop in a much wider ocean of needs.

Standard criteria for counting and reporting climate finance is required to enable transparent monitoring, reporting and verification. Common methodologies are needed to more accurately measure and compare financial contributions while fostering trust and accountability between donors and recipients. Accountability is also key to guaranteeing that promises are delivered in a timely, fair and efficient manner.

A key discrepancy concerns what counts as “new and additional” finance. ACT Alliance believes this finance must be in addition to committed Official Development Assistance (ODA). Counting existing ODA levels or aid as climate finance could limit resources allocated to other critical needs of developing countries while discounting the efforts required to meet the Paris commitments. Redirecting ODA in this way is therefore counterproductive. Clarity on the source and allocation of climate finance will have a significant impact on recipient countries.

While UN agreements provide some clarity on what constitutes climate finance, including an operational definition by the UNFCCC Standing Committee of Finance, its application is muddled. For instance, it allows developed countries to use a wide range of financial instruments, including non-concessional loans and guarantees from both public and private sources, to meet their commitments and to “self-determine” the resources that they report, without significant measures of adequacy and accountability.

ACT Alliance recognises that loans risk increasing recipient countries’ debt burden when accessed to address climate impacts they had little responsibility for. Therefore, concessional instruments should be reported through their grant-equivalency, accounting for backflows such as returned profits on investments or interest on loans. Inconsistent accounting on private-sector investments has led to exaggerations of finance leveraged by them, shrugged-off responsibility from other actors, and inflated reports of donor contributions. This has resulted in inadequate support for developing countries.

Despite being grossly insufficient, the commitment to annually mobilise US\$100 billion in climate finance is important. A much larger amount is needed to support the global transition toward a green and resilient future. Parties committed to the Paris Agreement should shift global financial flows away from fossil fuel-based investments toward sustainable development. The shift should include phasing out fossil fuel subsidies and investments in fossil fuel-related activities.

COP21 decided that post-2025 finance must exceed the US\$100 billion annual commitment. The new finance goal, given the needs and priorities of developing countries, must effectively deliver climate finance and enable transformative climate action. It should also set minimum allocations for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), report on grant equivalent amounts and set specific target allocations for adaptation, mitigation and loss and damage.

ACT Alliance believes that both developed countries and major economies in the developing world should commit to these post-2025 allocations in a proportionate manner reflecting the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC). The post-2025 financial target should be revised during the UNFCCC’s Global Stocktake, and commitment levels adjusted to reflect progress made towards the Paris Agreement.

ACT Alliance's work has made starkly apparent the disproportionate impact of climate change on poor and marginalised populations. Climate finance contributions could redress this inequity through ambitious and just allocations to each of adaptation, mitigation and loss and damage.

Funds for loss and damage should be channelled through the newly created Loss and Damage Fund and other existing funds and instruments, as well as through a new fund dedicated to addressing ongoing and *ex post* loss and damage. Affected countries, especially from the Global South, must be key parts of the decision-making. ACT Alliance believes that UN governance for climate finance is much better placed to deliver justice for the Global South than the Bretton Woods Institutions or other arrangements.

Existing humanitarian principles could be applied to rapid onset disasters – saving lives should never be compromised due to uncertainty about how they are connected to climate change. Innovative sources of finance for adaptation and loss and damage should be developed.

To support the most vulnerable, climate finance should include strict social, economic and environmental safeguards. All financing flows should contribute to sustainable development, the fulfilment of human rights and increased gender equality. To ensure just, comprehensive and accountable policies, civil society groups must be able to observe and contribute to decision-making on climate finance.

7.2 | Technology

Development of and access to technologies play an important role in the global transition towards sustainable development. Developing countries should leapfrog towards energy-efficient technologies and renewable energy, instead of following the fossil fuel development path of developed countries .

While there is a big focus on technologies related to mitigation, adaptation is equally important. Needs assessments and development of technological solutions should be done in cooperation with the relevant people and communities.

Climate change cannot be solved through technological solutions alone. Green transitioning will require changes in practices, cultures, traditions, methodologies and technologies; only if all these are addressed will sustainable change be possible. Technologies should be employed to achieve the 1.5° goal, as well as address issues such as just transition, adaptation and loss and damage.

Sometimes solutions are developed and deployed rapidly, without thorough testing, consultation and consideration. ACT Alliance is concerned about current discussions on geo-engineering and technical solutions that may have negative and radical side effects on development. At the same time, Intellectual Property Rights must not become an obstacle for developing countries to vastly increase their renewable energy production.

7.3 | Role of businesses and financial institutions

To manage the climate crisis, all sectors – including businesses and financial institutions – must engage. The private sector can play an important role, contributing technical solutions and necessary investments. However, investments must be socially and environmentally responsible. Businesses and investors should follow the [UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights](#), and align their engagement with national plans and ambitions. At minimum, large multinationals must implement environmental and human rights due diligence both *ex ante* and *post factum* to protect the environment and respect the right to prior and informed consent. International financial institutions must abide by international human rights law and, therefore, their investments, plans and activities must not merely pursue profit. Their strategies and investment models must become green and climate responsive to catalyse global finance flows towards low-carbon, resilient pathways and sustainable development.

Collaboration between the private sector and civil society is important; private investments should always include dialogue with local communities. Transparency, trust and dialogue must guide the engagement to ensure that local interests and rights are respected.

7.4 | Capacity-building

The Paris Agreement specifies that the capacity and ability of developing country parties should be enhanced, particularly countries with the least capacity, such as the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, and those that are especially vulnerable to climate change.

Capacity-building includes the ability to implement adaptation and mitigation actions, facilitate technological developments, disseminate and deploy activities, access climate finance, access relevant information, training and public awareness, and transparent, timely and accurate communication of information.

ACT Alliance believes that capacity-building is integral to achieving the objectives of the Framework Convention and the Paris Agreement, and calls for support through the Paris Committee on Capacity Building. ACT Alliance also calls for consideration of the important role as providers and recipients of capacity-building of non-state actors such as civil society, churches and other faith-based organisations in implementing the Paris Agreement and climate policy and action at all levels.

Capacity-building initiatives should integrate gender and youth perspectives, and train participants in the gender dimensions of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Such initiatives should develop competencies among marginalised groups to participate effectively in decision-making at local, national, regional and global levels.

8 Campaign and Movement Building

ACT Alliance aims to mobilise its members and church constituencies to seek positive changes in policy and practice, and to raise awareness of climate justice, environmental sustainability and care for Creation through campaigning and mobilisation.

ACT works with members and churches to safeguard the integrity of Creation by:

- raising the voices of those most vulnerable to climate change;
- strengthening the capacity and leadership of local initiatives to become better stewards of Creation;
- holding governments and other duty bearers accountable to commitments made under the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals and other global frameworks; and
- encouraging people to act for climate justice.

Under the umbrella of the “ACT Now for Climate Justice” campaign, ACT Alliance focuses on climate resilience and promotes the human face of climate change. ACT aims to reach the hearts and minds of the network’s global faith constituency, and facilitates tangible activities to enable our network to contribute to change in national contexts.

ACT also celebrates the annual [Season of Creation](#), in which the global ecumenical family unites to celebrate, listen to and care for our common home, the Oikos of God. It is carried out in parishes and faith communities between September 1 and October 4, leading into the annual UNFCCC COPs. The annual Season of Creation Celebration Guide is available in many languages and includes climate justice-related prayers, liturgy and advocacy ideas suitable for raising awareness and action at the local level.

ACT’s mobilisation work complements our policy and advocacy work, and raises our moral and ethical voice as a faith-based network. The campaign serves as a bridge between technical, moral and ethical perspectives on climate justice. With the global ecumenical community behind it, ACT will seek to achieve greater policy changes favouring climate justice, and will hold governments and decision-makers to account.

Ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement will require shifts in policy, lifestyles and energy sources. Faith leaders and church congregations can show leadership by making changes in their everyday lives, and by mainstreaming discourse to make policy changes more acceptable to the public. Faith leaders are increasingly engaged in conversations with decision-makers, the media and their congregations on what needs to be done.

By mobilising ACT Forums and their constituencies to advocate for implementation of the Paris Agreement at national levels, ACT will encourage individual countries to ambitiously reduce emissions, and invest in adaptation and efforts to address loss and damage. The campaign will complement relevant campaigns of the alliance (such as ACT’s Gender Justice Campaign), while integrating the climate-related themes of ACT’s Gender Justice and Migration and Displacement programmes.

The ACT Now for Climate Justice campaign provides ways for people all over the world to stand in solidarity in the fight for climate justice and to raise their own voices alongside those of the most climate-vulnerable. It is also an umbrella to work closely with other ecumenical and multi-faith movements.

Join our Campaign

ACT Now for Climate Justice

 @actclimate

 #ACT4Climate

For more information regarding our climate justice work or if you'd like to join our ACT Alliance global community of climate justice advocates, please contact:

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9 Resources

- [Ethiopia: Nuances of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan](#), ACT Ethiopia Forum (2022)
- [Ideas for climate advocacy](#), ACT Alliance (2022)
- [Addressing the Protection Gap — Human Mobility and the Climate Crisis in International Frameworks](#), ACT Alliance and Bread for the World (2023)
- [Women on the Front Line: Healing the Earth, Seeking Justice](#), Christian Aid (2021)
- [When the climate becomes a threat: Evidence of climate change induced Loss and Damage in Nepal](#), DanChurchAid (2021)
- [Limiting Global Warming to 1.5 Degrees](#), ACT Alliance, World Council of Churches, Bread for the World, Lutheran World Federation. (2018)
- [Post 2025 Climate Finance Architecture — through a climate justice lens](#), ACT Alliance (2021)



PHOTO: Ethiopia: Community members share seedlings in the market road.
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