

September, 2025

# TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE

## Nordic Africa Foreign Ministers' Meeting

Key messages developed by ACT Alliance members, including ACT Forums, Communities of Practices and Reference Group Representatives based in the Africa and Nordic regions.

### Introduction

We, ACT Alliance, are a global faith-based coalition organized in national and regional forums operating in more than 120 countries. Through our more than 140 members, we work on humanitarian aid, gender and climate justice, migration and displacement, and peace and security to support local communities. Our goal is to promote a locally led and coordinated approach to advocacy, humanitarian and developmental issues. The inclusion of civil society perspectives, particularly those of faith-based actors, is essential to ensure inclusive, sustainable, and rights-based development cooperation, trade, and business relations. Faith-based actors play a critical role in many African societies, often acting as first responders in humanitarian crises, and long-standing agents for peace, reconciliation, and social cohesion. With deep roots in local communities, these actors offer unique insights, legitimacy, and access in hard to-reach areas where state institutions may be absent.

As civil society and faith-based actors, we urge the Nordic and African governments to build strong, inclusive partnerships between Nordic and African countries, grounded in human rights, democratic values, and mutual accountability, and aligned with continental and global frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Samoa Agreement.

### 1. Trade and Investments

**1.1. Promote Fair and Inclusive Trade Rules:** Promote global trade systems that allow African countries to protect and grow local industries, diversify exports, and move up the value chain. The AfCFTA offers an important framework to strengthen intra-African trade while ensuring that trade agreements with Europe and beyond do not undermine but rather reinforce fair trade and national development goals.

**1.2. Ensure Responsible and Sustainable Investment:** Push for investments that respect human rights, protect the environment, and benefit local communities in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), especially in sectors like agriculture, energy, and infrastructure.

### 1.3. Empower Marginalised Groups in

**Trade and Investment:** Ensure women, informal workers, migrant workers, and Indigenous communities are included in trade policies and benefit from investment and livelihood opportunities.

### 1.4. Support Regional Integration and

**African-Led Solutions:** Back initiatives that promote South-South cooperation to strengthen intra-African trade and development under AfCFTA.

## 2. Debt and Fiscal Justice

### 2.1. Tackle Illicit Financial Flows and

**Strengthen Tax Justice:** Call for stronger measures to stop tax evasion and illicit capital flight from Africa and support fair taxation systems to boost domestic revenue. Efforts to strengthen governance must include anti-corruption measures to increase public trust and ensure that fiscal and financial policies are accountable, equitable, and directly improve the lives of citizens.

### 2.2. Establish a Fair and Transparent Debt

**Resolution Mechanism:** Advocate for an UN-led sovereign debt framework and take decisive action to cancel the debt in this Jubilee year for African countries facing unsustainable debt burdens and take action to reduce the unjustifiably high cost of capital faced by African countries. At the same time, address irresponsible and corrupt loan management by governments, ensuring that debt relief is tied to transparent and accountable fiscal governance.

### 2.3. Support Progressive and Equitable

**Tax Systems:** Push for progressive taxation and international cooperation to stop illicit financial flows, ensuring African governments can raise revenue to invest in health, education, and social protection.

### 2.4. Support the Establishment of a UN

**Tax Convention:** Push for a legally binding global instrument with protocols that promote tax cooperation, boost domestic resource mobilisation and reduce debt vulnerabilities. While also curb abuses and give all countries an equal voice in shaping international tax rules.

### 2.5. Reform Global Financial

**Governance:** Call for greater African representation and voice in international financial institutions to ensure decisions reflect the continent's development needs, priorities and realities.

## 3. Multilateral Co-operation

### 3.1. Strengthen UN-Led Multilateral Governance, which is essential for addressing complex challenges:

Advocate for an UN-anchored system for technical assistance, data access, and that ensures Nordic and African countries have a stronger voice in addressing gender injustice, climate change, and economic inequality—through shared resources, capacity strengthening, collective action, and mutual respect among nations.

### 3.1. Defend and Increase Development

**Cooperation:** Push for sustained, predictable, and scaled-up Official Development Assistance (ODA) that aligns with African priorities and supports long-term transformative development. Call for renewed commitment to inclusive development planning and decision-making, where African governments and civil society lead and own the process.

### 3.2. Promote Fair Global Rules and

**Standards:** Support international frameworks that prioritise human rights, climate, gender, and economic justice, with the full inclusion of civil society.

### 3.4. Advance Climate and Gender

#### **Justice through Multilateral Action:**

Press multilateral institutions to deliver ambitious and accessible climate finance while embedding gender equality at the core of all policies and programmes. Prioritise support for African countries that face disproportionate climate impacts, ensuring resources reach frontline communities, including faith communities, and women who bear the brunt of the crisis. Champion stronger global frameworks that address the nexus of water, food security, and environmental displacement, linking climate justice with human rights and sustainable development.

## 4. Climate Justice

### 4.1. Ensure Climate Finance is

#### **Accessible, Adequate, and Fair:**

Advocate for increased and predictable climate finance, prioritising grants over loans to avoid worsening African debt burdens.

### 4.2. Support Adaptation and Loss &

**Damage:** Provide and mobilise climate finance for adaptation and loss and damage with dedicated funding for loss and damage in climate-vulnerable African countries.

### 4.3. Promote Just and Inclusive Climate

**Transitions:** Support just transition frameworks that protect workers, communities, and the environment - ensuring African countries can shift to green resilient economies without deepening inequality.

### 4.4. Strengthen African Leadership in

**Climate Governance:** Advocate for greater African representation and influence in global climate negotiations and decision-making processes, ensuring local priorities are respected.

## 5. Peace and Security

### 5.1. Address Root Causes of Conflict:

Advocate for peacebuilding strategies in Africa that tackle underlying drivers of violence and conflict—such as poverty, inequality, marginalisation, and climate emergencies - through inclusive and community-led approaches that prioritise prevention, strengthen social cohesion.

### 5.1. Strengthen Community Resilience

**and Conflict Prevention:** Support initiatives that strengthen local capacity to prevent and manage conflict, including partnerships with churches, civil society, community leaders and faith-based networks.

### 5.3. Promote Inclusive Participation in

**Peace Processes:** Ensure women, youth, people with disabilities, and marginalised groups are actively involved in decision-making, post-conflict reconstruction, and transitional justice, recognising their vital role in sustainable peace.

### 5.4. Strengthen accountability

**mechanisms:** Ensure CSOs and local communities have the ability to hold parties and decisionmakers to account.

## 6. Youth Leadership and Participation

### 6.1. Promote Youth Leadership and

**Participation:** Move beyond tokenistic inclusion by ensuring that young people are recognised as equal partners and leaders in shaping policy and governance. Young people are the changemakers of today hence their meaningful participation in global decision-making ensures more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable solutions for the world's most pressing challenges.

### 6.2. Invest in Youth Economic

**Empowerment:** Push for policies and programs that support youth employment, entrepreneurship, and access to finance, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

### 6.3. Ensure Access to Quality Education and Skills Development:

Advocate for comprehensive policies and programs that promote decent and sustainable youth employment, foster entrepreneurship, and expand equitable access to finance and credit. By investing in youth economic empowerment, societies can unlock innovation, reduce poverty, and build resilient, inclusive economies for the future.

### 6.4. Strengthen Youth-Led Movements and Networks:

Support youth-led organisations and intergenerational partnerships that amplify young people's voices and leadership in development, humanitarian, peace, gender, and climate justice efforts.

## 7. Migration and Displacement

**7.1. Protect the Right to Stay:** Safeguard people's right to remain in their homes and communities without being forced to migrate by necessity. This requires governments and international partners to guarantee access to quality education, healthcare, decent work, and social protection, while upholding human rights and protecting the environment. Investing in resilient livelihoods, sustainable development, and peacebuilding is essential to create stable, dignified, and secure living conditions that make migration a choice, not a compulsion.

### 7.2. Ensure People can Safely and Legally

**Migrate:** When people need or choose to move, their human rights must be fully protected at every stage of the journey. This requires states to uphold

international law and refugee protection frameworks, expand safe and regular migration pathways, and dismantle barriers that push people into dangerous routes. Governments must prevent trafficking and exploitation, guarantee access to justice and basic services, and ensure fair and dignified treatment for all migrants and refugees, regardless of status.

### 7.3 Support Dignified Return and

**Reintegration:** Ensure that return and reintegration policies uphold the rights and dignity of all returnees. Returns must be voluntary, safe, and respectful—never forced or punitive—and accompanied by long-term support that allows people to rebuild their lives. This includes guaranteed access to essential services, decent work, psychosocial assistance, and justice for past abuses. Reintegration strategies should be developed with community involvement, ensuring social cohesion and addressing the structural conditions that triggered migration in the first place. For those who return, policies must support their reintegration with access to services, justice for past abuses, and non-punitive repatriation. Voluntary return should be safe and respectful, with long-term support to rebuild lives.

### 7.3. Promote Social Cohesion and

**Inclusion:** Confront xenophobia and discrimination by advancing community-led and faith-based initiatives that foster solidarity and mutual understanding with displaced populations. Leaders must not only enforce anti-discrimination laws but also actively guarantee migrants' equal access to education, healthcare, housing, and decent work. Inclusive programmes should integrate language training, cultural orientation, and awareness of rights and responsibilities, enabling migrants to participate fully in society. Host communities can strengthen cohesion by investing in dialogue platforms, joint service delivery, and

artistic or cultural events that celebrate diversity, build trust, and create shared spaces where migrants feel welcomed, valued, and able to contribute. Promoting social cohesion is both a moral imperative and a foundation for peaceful, resilient, and inclusive societies.

### **7.4. Advance durable solutions for refugees and host communities:**

Lasting solutions for refugees must go hand-in-hand with strengthened resilience and development opportunities for host communities. This requires equitable access to land, decent work, education, healthcare, and housing for all, alongside policies that prevent discrimination and foster self-reliance. Durable solutions—voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement—should be pursued in ways that respect refugees' agency and provide them with real, sustainable choices. Countries and communities that embrace inclusive approaches and shoulder the responsibility of protection deserve substantial and predictable international support—through financing, technical cooperation, and fair responsibility-sharing—to ensure that solidarity translates into improved lives and stronger societies for both refugees and hosts.

### **7.5. Address Structural Drivers of**

**Displacement:** Tackle the root causes that force people to flee—armed conflict, poverty, environmental degradation, and the accelerating impacts of climate change—by addressing the deeper systemic factors of inequality, discrimination, poor governance, corruption, and persistent human rights violations. Exploitative economic practices and resource extraction that undermine livelihoods must also be curbed through stronger regulation and accountability. Durable solutions require sustained investment in locally led peacebuilding, climate adaptation, and inclusive, rights-based development that prioritizes the

needs and agency of affected communities. Strengthening democratic governance, ensuring equal access to justice and services, and guaranteeing meaningful participation of displaced persons and host communities in planning solutions such as integration, voluntary repatriation, or resettlement are essential steps toward building safer, more resilient, and just societies.

### **7.6. Ensure Legal Protection and Access**

**to Justice:** Robust legal frameworks are essential to uphold the rights of migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and returnees. Governments must guarantee accessible, affordable, and gender-sensitive legal assistance; uphold obligations under national constitutions and international law; and ensure fair treatment across all justice institutions. Legal aid programmes should secure documentation, address disputes, and facilitate equal access to public services, while also tackling barriers linked to language, status, or discrimination. Justice systems must be reformed to strengthen independence, integrity, and accountability, with explicit safeguards against bias and exclusion. Special priority should be placed on creating safe, survivor-centered environments where all individuals—particularly women, children, and marginalized groups—can report abuses without fear of reprisal. Expanding public awareness of rights, remedies, and procedures is equally critical to empower communities and guarantee that protection translates into real access to justice for all.

## **8. Gender Justice**

### **8.1. Mainstream Gender in All Programs:**

Address the distinct gender needs in climate, health, and development initiatives.

### 8.2. Prioritise Gender Justice for

**Sustainable Development:** Gender justice is a fundamental prerequisite for achieving sustainable development and inclusive societies. Prioritise and invest in locally led gender justice initiatives that respond to context-specific realities, dismantle structural barriers, and challenge discriminatory norms.

### 8.3. Improve access to accurate SRHR

**information and services:** Understand the socio-economic realities adolescents face: poverty, peer pressure, digital exposure, limited education. Promote services that target women and girls especially in rural areas.

### 8.4. Adopt Transformative and

**Innovative Approaches:** Innovative actions must go beyond traditional approaches and focus on systemic transformation, community engagement, and technology driven solutions.

### 8.5. Foster Faith–Feminist

**Collaboration:** Build alliances between faith-based and feminist actors to challenge harmful norms and promote justice.

### 8.6. Promote Women’s Leadership and

**Accountability:** Guarantee women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. Hold institutions accountable for gender equality outcomes.

## About ACT Alliance

We are a global faith-based coalition organized in national and regional forums operating in more than 120 countries.

Through our more than 150 members, we work on humanitarian aid, gender and climate justice, migration and displacement, and peace and security to support local communities. Our goal is to promote a locally-led and coordinated approach to advocacy, humanitarian and developmental issues.

## Basic Facts about the Alliance

ACT Alliance is composed of more than 150 faith-based member organisations working in long-term development, advocacy and humanitarian assistance.

- Our members work in **more than 120 countries**
- Our members employ **more than 30,000 staff and volunteers globally**
- Our members mobilise approximately more than **\$ 2 billions each year**
- The alliance is supported by an international Secretariat of more than 25 staff based in Geneva, Bangkok, New York, Toronto, Amman, Bogota, Nairobi and Brussels.
- ACT Alliance was established on 1 January 2010 by bringing together the vision, resources, the people of the organisations who have been working together since 1995 as ACT International and since 2003 as ACT Development.