

COP28
SPECIAL
EDITION

COP28 OUTCOMES: BOON OR BANE FOR AFRICAN CLIMATE ACTION?



aacj.africa

A look back at COP28

Explore a 360-degree view of COP28's impact on Africa in our special newsletter: insights, activism, policies, and financial realities.

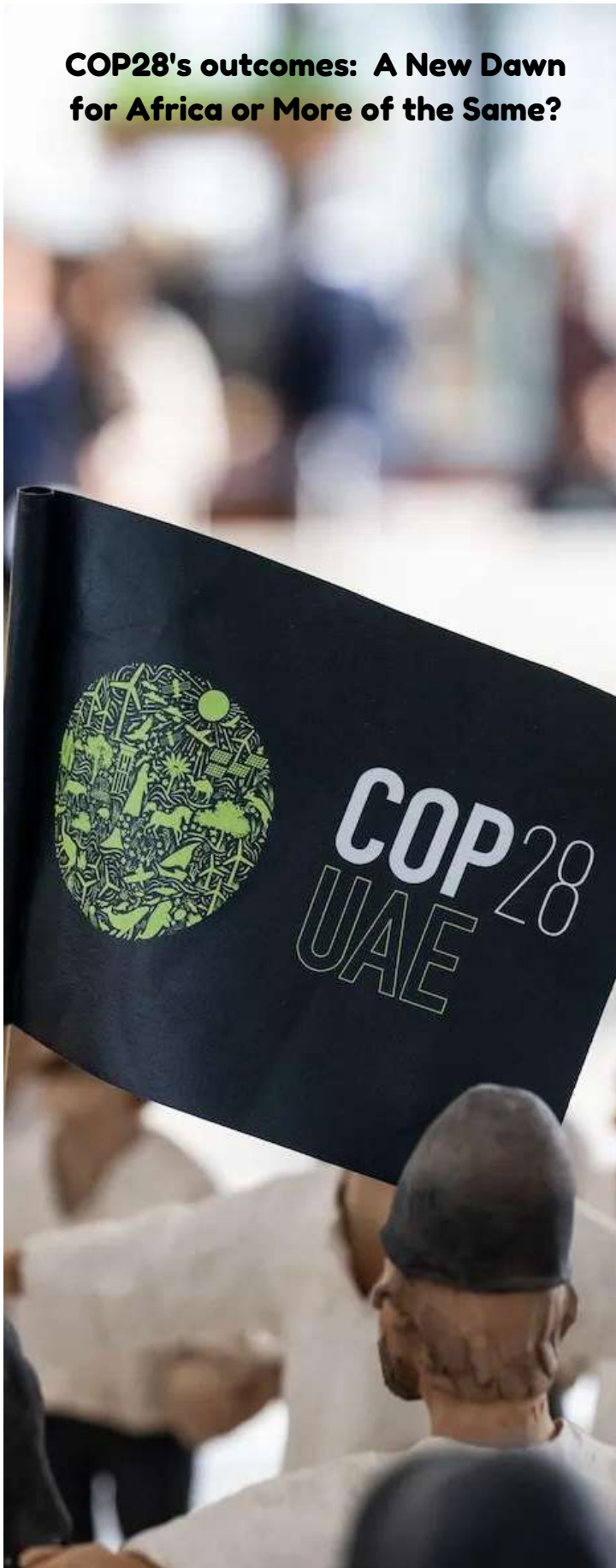
SPOTLIGHT ON AFRICAN ACTIVISTS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE



spotlight on AACJ

Summary

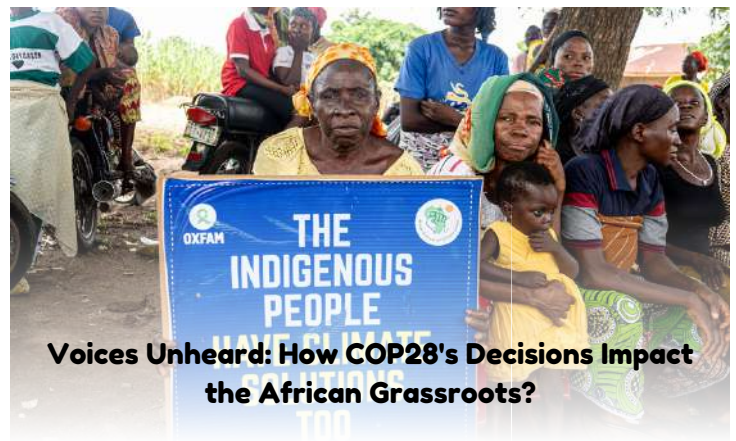
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Dear Readers

by the Program Management Team

As we step into the new year, we extend our warmest wishes to all our readers. This edition of our newsletter takes you through the pivotal moments and key outcomes of the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), held in Dubai. We aim to provide a comprehensive analysis, reflecting on the significant strides made and the challenges that lie ahead, particularly from an African perspective.

At COP28, the announcement of the operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund marked a significant, albeit complex, victory. While it represents progress in acknowledging the impact of climate change on vulnerable nations, the intricacies surrounding its implementation, particularly the non-binding nature of commitments and the ambiguity in funding arrangements, point to a road filled with hurdles. We delve into these complexities, scrutinizing the implications for African nations and the broader quest for climate justice.

The first Global Stocktake at COP28 was another focal point, offering a moment of introspection on global climate action efforts. Our analysis highlights what this means for Africa, where the need for adaptation and resilience is most urgent. Despite the progress, the gap between global efforts and the continent's needs remains a pressing concern.

We also spotlight the contributions of AACJ partners PACJA, OXFAM, Natural Justice, Femenet and African Youth Commission at COP28. Their advocacy for environmental defenders and the integration of human rights in energy transition policies shed light on the crucial role of community-driven approaches in climate action. Their participation underscores the need for inclusive policies that prioritize the voices of those most affected by climate change.

We wish to extend heartfelt gratitude to our consortium members and all contributors who have tirelessly worked towards making this edition insightful and informative. Your dedication and expertise in navigating the complexities of climate discussions are invaluable in our collective pursuit of a sustainable and just future.

This newsletter not only offers a retrospective of COP28 but also serves as a reminder of the ongoing challenges in our journey towards effective and equitable climate action. It's a call to intensify our efforts, to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable are not just heard but are central in shaping the future of global climate policy. Let us move forward with renewed commitment and hope, advocating for change that transcends boundaries and unites us in our fight against climate change.



Our Advocacy Campaign Towards COP28

At COP28, the African Activists for Climate Justice (AACJ) program played a pivotal role through its support of two influential advocacy campaigns: Oxfam's 'Polluter Pay' and PACJA's 'Keep Your Promises'. Both campaigns, integral to the AACJ's agenda, shared a unified objective: demanding accountability from those chiefly responsible for climate change and urging the fulfillment of longstanding international commitments.

KEEP YOUR PROMISE CAMPAIGN BY PACJA

PACJA's 'Keep Your Promises' campaign focused on holding developed countries accountable for their financial commitments towards climate change mitigation and adaptation in developing countries. The campaign highlighted the gap between the promises made in previous climate agreements and their actual implementation.

The campaign aimed to pressure developed nations to honor their commitments, such as the \$100 billion per year pledge for climate finance. It emphasized the need for transparency and accountability in the disbursement of these funds and sought to ensure that they are used effectively to address the pressing climate challenges faced by vulnerable nations.

Read for more : <https://pacja.org/keep-your-promise-campaign-page/>



POLLUTERS PAY BY OXFAM

Oxfam's 'Polluter Pay' campaign was predicated on the principle that those who have contributed most to climate change should bear the brunt of the costs associated with mitigating its effects. This campaign was aimed at addressing the imbalance where countries least responsible for carbon emissions face some of the harshest impacts of climate change.

The primary objective was to advocate for the implementation of mechanisms that would ensure that large emitters and multinational corporations contribute financially to the global efforts in combating climate change. This includes proposals for carbon taxes and other financial instruments that would redirect funds from polluters to affected communities, especially in developing countries like those in Africa.

Read for more: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-oxfam/tax-the-biggest-polluters-now/>

AACJ AT COP28





PACJA

During the COP28 preparatory workshop in Dubai, African civil society organizations united under **PACJA** assessed progress from COP27. Over 70,000 delegates attended the 28th session of the UNFCCC. The workshop aimed to finalize Africa's common stance for COP28, emphasizing the need for real action beyond pledges to tackle the climate crisis. PACJA's Executive Director, Dr. Mithika Mwenda, highlighted the urgent climate impacts on developing countries, especially in Africa, citing recent floods and droughts in Kenya as examples. He also noted contradictions in global responses, referencing an OECD report on unmet climate finance commitments of \$100 billion. For more on PACJA's role and actions at COP28, you can read the summary: (<https://www.pacja.org/cop28-highlights>).

At the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, **Oxfam** focused on advocating for the phase-out of fossil fuels and financial aid for climate mitigation in lower-income countries. They participated in advocacy events, promoted petitions, and launched campaigns. While the conference marked progress in recognizing fossil fuel reduction and establishing a loss and damage fund, Oxfam noted that the outcomes were not as robust as needed. Moving forward, Oxfam's efforts will concentrate on ensuring adequate support for renewable energy transitions and holding responsible parties accountable. Read the full details: <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/stories/what-happened-at-cop28/>.



FEMNET

At COP28, a panel led by social movements and grassroots women addressed climate, gender, and economic injustices, focusing on loss and damage and the responsibilities of states and corporations. Additionally, Beryl Ringos interviewed Memory Kachambwa, **Femnet's** Executive Director, on the "Dear Life Podcast" from Dubai, discussing women's leadership in climate action. For detailed insights on Femnet's involvement at COP28, visit their website : <https://www.femnet.org/2023/12/cop-28-october-november-2023-ebulletin/>

At COP28, Natural Justice and AACJ colleagues highlighted environmental defenders' roles and the human rights aspect of energy transitions through key events and webinars. They also engaged in demonstrations for climate finance and human rights, contributed to policy briefs on environmental protection, and advocated for community-inclusive approaches in climate action. Their participation emphasized the importance of rights-based strategies in global climate discussions. For more information about Natural Justice : <https://naturaljustice.org/>



NATURAL JUSTICE



AFRICAN YOUTH COMMISSION

During COP28, **AYC's** efforts to enhance youth engagement included events on climate education and gender intersectionality. They emphasized the importance of understanding the UNFCCC process and building youth capacity. AYC also showcased local adaptation initiatives in Senegal, highlighting the challenges faced by youth in agriculture due to climate change. They called for stronger youth representation, support for young farmers and entrepreneurs, and responses to climate change that prioritize inclusive climate justice. These efforts aimed to amplify youth voices and promote sustainable livelihoods for young people in the face of climate challenges.

COP28's outcomes: A New Dawn for Africa or More of the Same?

An analysis from the AACJ Partners





Africa's top priorities at cop28

At COP28, African nations articulated their demands and aspirations through various channels, including the Nairobi Declaration(https://au.int/sites/default/files/decisions/43124-Nairobi_Declaration_06092023.pdf), the African Group of Negotiators (AGN), and other non-state actors. Below is a summary of these demands, with a focus on the key points from each platform:

Nairobi Declaration

- **Global Carbon Tax Regime:** A call for a comprehensive carbon tax regime on fossil fuels, maritime transport, and aviation, and a global financial transaction tax (FTT) to make financing for green growth more accessible.
- **\$600 Billion for Renewable Energy:** To bridge Africa's energy gap, there is a demand for a \$600 billion investment to achieve a 300 Giga Watts renewable energy target by 2030.
- **Restructuring the International Financial System:** Advocacy for reforms in the multilateral financial system and the creation of a Global Climate Finance Charter by 2025.

African Group of Negotiators (AGN)

- **Climate Finance:** A push for more "adequate and predictable finance," focusing on enhanced and predictable climate financing.
- **Operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund:** A requirement for at least \$100 billion a year from industrialized nations to all developing countries to address losses and damages associated with climate change.
- **Just Energy Transition:** Advocacy for affordable clean energy sources and increased investments for a just energy transition.

- **Special Needs and Circumstances Status for Africa:** A quest for Africa to be granted special needs and circumstances status, recognizing its unique challenges and vulnerabilities.

Non-State Actors

- **Strengthening Adaptation Actions:** Emphasis on adaptation as a priority, with a focus on helping those suffering from the adverse impacts of climate change.
- **Increased Investment in Renewable Energy:** Highlighting the need for at least \$2 trillion by 2050 in the power sector alone to drive green growth on the continent.

Additional Points

- **Global Stock Take:** A call for an ambitious outcome of the first global stock take at COP28 that captures the progress towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- **Innovative Financing Options:** Exploration of innovative financing mechanisms, including private sector investments, to bridge the financial gap.

Read more: <https://pacja.org/africa-climate-summit-non-state-actors-demands-and-red-lines/>

The emphasis on both adaptation and mitigation, alongside significant financial support, underscores the continent's determination to shape its climate destiny and contribute meaningfully to global climate action. The call for a restructuring of the international financial system and the establishment of mechanisms like a global carbon tax regime and a Global Climate Finance Charter reflect a push for systemic changes that would enable more effective and equitable climate financing.

Interpreting COP28: A Climate Turning Point for Africa?

In Dubai's COP28, the African Activists for Climate Justice witnessed firsthand the intricate tapestry of global climate politics – a realm where lofty promises often clash with the stark realities of those facing the daily brunt of climate change. This summit, while a convergence of ideas and commitments, also laid bare the enormous challenges and disparities in addressing climate change, particularly from an African perspective.

Justice and Equity

Natural Justice

Justice and equity, essential to the African climate justice movement, were again overshadowed at COP28. This forum, meant to amplify voices from marginalized communities, including African nations, was dominated by over 2,456 fossil-fuel lobbyists, dimming the presence of many country delegations.

COP27's end had promised hope with the establishment of a “loss and damage” fund, aimed to support vulnerable countries, particularly in Africa, severely affected by climate change. This fund, intended as financial aid from industrial powers to developing nations, was a milestone in the fight for climate justice. Yet, the mere \$429 million raised is a fraction of the estimated \$400 billion annual need, with no commitments for increased funding. This is starkly highlighted by the United States' contribution of \$17.5 million, minimal considering its significant role in cumulative greenhouse gas emissions.

Furthermore, the COP28 agreement on transitioning from fossil fuels, while progressive, fell short of African continent goals. The language of the agreement allowed potential loopholes for continued fossil fuel use, threatening the well-being of Africa's most vulnerable communities already grappling with the harsh impacts of climate change. The reliance on fossil fuels aggravates these challenges, underlining the need for a more decisive shift towards sustainable energy solutions.

The conference's stance on fossil fuels – a call for a ‘just, orderly, and equitable’ transition away – is another area of disconnect. For many African nations, fossil fuels remain a significant economic pillar. While the global push is towards renewable energy, the immediate reality for many African communities is that their livelihoods are still tied to fossil fuel industries. This transition, unless managed carefully and equitably, risks leaving millions behind, exacerbating poverty and social unrest.

Policy and money is what matters

PACJA

At COP28 in Dubai, the key issue for African nations revolved around “fossil fuels.” Despite their recognized impact on climate change, real discussions on this topic are often stifled in international forums. The mention of fossil fuels in the COP28 communique is a step forward, but it's not enough.

For African countries, the real change depends on what happens after such conferences. The non-binding nature of the communique means that actual progress hinges on concrete policies and financial support from wealthier nations. These countries, responsible for significant emissions, must reduce fossil fuel use and help African nations access sustainable energy alternatives.

Most crucially, operationalizing the loss and damage fund is vital for African nations. This fund is more than aid; it's a matter of justice, recognizing that those who contributed least to climate change face the greatest challenges. For Africa, success post-COP28 will be measured by the implementation of effective policies and the mobilization of resources to support their transition to a sustainable and resilient future.

READ COP28 OUTCOMES ANALYSIS BY PACJA:
<https://aacj.africa/2023/12/19/analysis-of-dubai-uae-ufccc-cop28-decisions/>

The Gap Between High-Level Decisions and Local Realities

Natural Justice

COP28, despite its global stage and high-level negotiations, often seemed distant from the everyday realities of African local communities. The decisions made in air-conditioned conference halls, while crucial, sometimes failed to resonate with the immediate and pressing needs of those at the grassroots.

For instance, the much-discussed ‘loss and damage’ fund, hailed as a breakthrough, is yet to translate into tangible relief for smallholder farmers facing erratic weather patterns or coastal communities battling rising sea levels. The fund, despite its noble intent, is starkly underfunded and mired in bureaucratic complexities, making its impact on the ground minimal.

Fossil Fuels: A Double-Edged Sword

PACJA

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Adaptation Finance: A Distant Dream

PACJA

The disproportionate allocation of climate finance towards mitigation, with a mere fraction for adaptation, directly impacts African grassroots. Communities in dire need of climate-resilient infrastructure, agricultural support, and water conservation techniques find themselves at the mercy of inadequate and slow-moving financial support.

The focus of developed nations on cutting-edge technology and large-scale renewable projects overlooks simpler, more immediate adaptation needs like drought-resistant crops, flood defenses, and basic weather forecasting technologies that can make a significant difference at the local level.

The Global Stocktake: Global Stocktake: Africa's Urgent Climate Call:

African Youth Commission

The Global Stocktake at COP28 has sharply highlighted the substantial gaps in global climate efforts, particularly in relation to the unique challenges and needs of Africa. This crucial assessment emphasizes the dire need for increased adaptation measures and stronger international backing to aid African nations in their fight against the escalating impacts of climate change. Although there has been some advancement, the GST indicates a substantial necessity for more focused and substantial actions and financial pledges to close the adaptation shortfall.

For Africa, this entails not just the enhancement of its own climate strategies, but also a vigorous push for heightened global cooperation and support. This support is essential to ensure that Africa's journey towards climate resilience and sustainability is not only effectively backed but also expedited. Moving forward, the insights gained from the GST at COP28 are set to play a pivotal role in formulating Africa's climate policies and initiatives, stressing the continent's need for customized solutions and fair global support amidst an ever-evolving climate landscape.





Loss and Damage Fund - A Token Victory at COP28?

By Katherine Robinson, Advocacy and Campaign Lead, Natural Justice

The announcement at the opening plenary of COP28 regarding the operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund represented a symbolic achievement. However, this development has been met with significant disappointment by civil society and governments from the Global South. The fund's structure and governance, particularly the involvement of the World Bank as a temporary host, have raised critical concerns about its effectiveness in addressing the needs of those most affected by climate change.

The Fund's Weak and Vague Framework

Non-Binding and Ambiguous Language: The language surrounding the funding arrangements in the Loss and Damage Fund is notably weak and non-specific. This vagueness extends to the mechanisms for accessing finance, especially for developing and vulnerable states. The non-binding nature of the commitments further exacerbates concerns about the reliability and adequacy of the fund.

Absence of Human Rights Focus: The fund's framework lacks explicit mention of human rights, a significant omission given the profound human impacts of climate change. This gap raises questions about the fund's capacity to address the social and ethical dimensions of climate-induced losses and damages.

Controversies Surrounding the Fund's Management

World Bank's Involvement and Implications: The decision to have the World Bank temporarily host the fund, pushed largely by Global North governments, notably the USA, has been controversial. The World Bank's involvement is problematic due to the USA's disproportionate influence within the institution and the Bank's questionable track record on human rights issues.

This arrangement has led to skepticism about the fund's ability to operate in the best interests of the most vulnerable countries.

Undermining the Spirit of the Fund: For many activists and analysts, this approach to funding and governance undermines the core purpose and spirit of the Loss and Damage Fund. The Fund was envisioned as a mechanism to provide compensation to countries bearing the brunt of climate impacts, but the current arrangements seem to fall short of this goal.

Deviation from Key Paris Agreement Principles

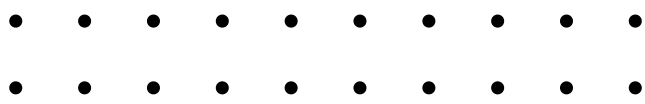
Lack of Historical Responsibility and Equity: One of the most glaring issues is that the principles of historical responsibility and equity, which are central to the Paris Agreement, do not adequately inform the current arrangements and operationalization of the fund. This oversight represents a deviation from the Agreement's foundational principles, potentially compromising the fund's effectiveness in delivering justice and support to those who need it most.

The Funding Gap and Its Implications

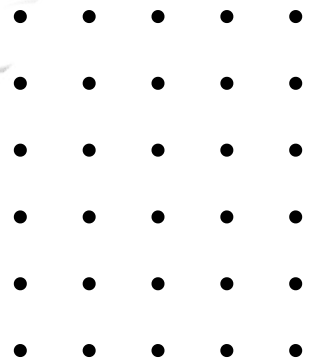
Scale of Pledges vs. Actual Needs: The pledges made at COP28 for the loss and damage fund amount to about \$429 million, a figure that is significantly less than Africa's estimated need of \$400 billion annually. This gap underlines the inadequacy of current financial commitments in addressing the continent's climate challenges.

Restrictive Nature of Funds: Often, these funds come with conditions limiting their use or are offered as loans, exacerbating the debt situation of African nations. The restrictive nature of these funds hinders their effective utilization in diverse and urgent climate-related scenarios.





Balancing Act: Funding Africa's Mitigation and Adaptation



As the curtains fell on COP28, the focus for African nations shifted to the tangible implementation of climate strategies amidst challenging financial landscapes. Insights from the "State and Trends in Climate Adaptation Finance 2023" <https://gca.org/reports/state-and-trends-in-climate-adaptation-finance-2023/> report cast a revealing light on the economic dimensions of Africa's climate battle, emphasizing the crucial role of financial resources in determining the continent's climate resilience and mitigation capacity.

A Deep Dive into Climate Finance

Funding Disparities: The report underscores a stark imbalance in global climate finance. Despite the overall increase to \$1.3 trillion in annual climate finance, the allocation for adaptation, crucial for Africa, remains worryingly insufficient at 5% of total climate finance. This figure falls alarmingly short of the estimated \$400 billion needed annually for adaptation in developing countries.

Africa's Share in the Global Pie: The financial allocation for Africa is particularly disproportionate. The continent, disproportionately affected by climate change, received only about 20% of global adaptation finance, totaling approximately \$13 billion annually. This is a fraction of Africa's estimated annual adaptation funding requirement of \$53 billion, highlighting a critical gap in meeting the continent's specific **needs**.

Mitigation and Adaptation: A Delicate Balancing Act

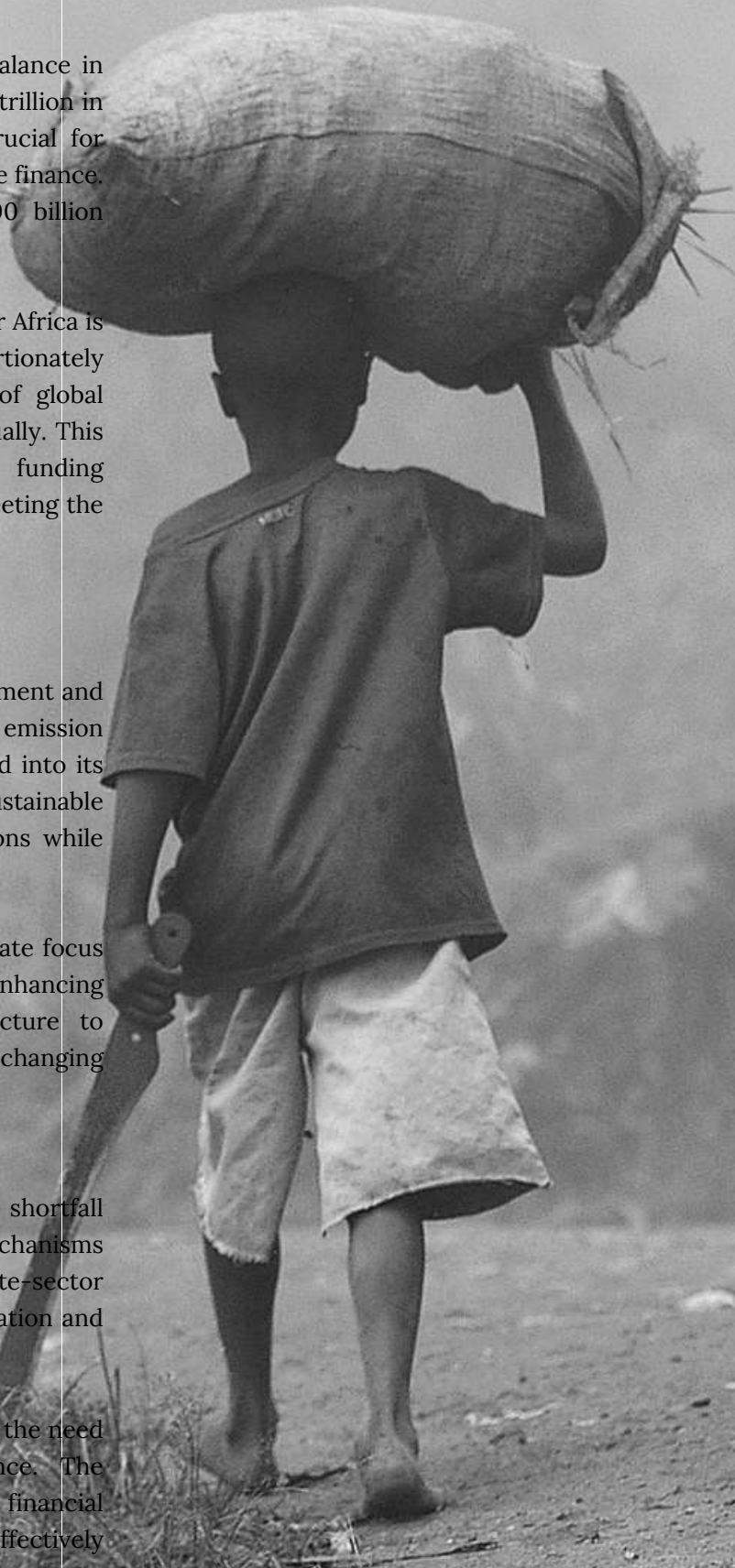
Future Emissions Concerns: With Africa's path of development and urbanization, the continent is at a crossroads where future emission levels could escalate unless mitigative steps are integrated into its growth models. Investments in renewable energy and sustainable urban development are pivotal in curbing future emissions while supporting economic growth.

Prioritizing Localized Adaptation Efforts: Africa's immediate focus lies in bolstering its adaptation measures. This includes enhancing community resilience, from climate-proofing infrastructure to developing sustainable agriculture practices suited to changing weather patterns.

Bridging the Financial Gap

Innovative Financing Solutions: The current funding shortfall necessitates innovative financial solutions. Exploring mechanisms such as green bonds, climate adaptation funds, and private-sector partnerships could unlock new funding avenues for adaptation and mitigation projects.

A Call for Global Solidarity: The report's findings reinforce the need for a renewed global commitment to climate finance. The international community must not only honor their financial pledges but also ensure these funds are accessible and effectively utilized to meet Africa's unique climate challenges.





Voices Unheard: How COP28's Decisions Impact the African Grassroots?

Mr. Ephraim Mwepya Shitima, Chair of the African Group of Negotiators

The 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) has, unfortunately, demonstrated a significant oversight in addressing the immediate climate crises facing African grassroots communities. This lack of attention to urgent needs, such as combating famine and providing disaster relief, starkly contrasts with the long-term strategies often emphasized at such international forums. This disconnect between high-level policies and on-the-ground realities not only exacerbates the vulnerability of these communities but also highlights a critical gap in global climate action.

Famine and disaster relief are among the most pressing issues that have been overlooked. The dire situation of famine, exacerbated by climate-induced droughts and floods, is a reality for millions in Africa. The decisions made at COP28, though perhaps well-intentioned in their focus on long-term climate strategies, fail to address these immediate humanitarian crises. Without urgent and direct action, the situation threatens to push more communities into the depths of hunger and poverty, undermining the very fabric of societal stability and progress.

Additionally, the lack of rapid response mechanisms to climate-induced emergencies is a glaring issue. African communities frequently face immediate impacts from climate events, requiring prompt and effective intervention. The absence of such mechanisms translates into a lack of preparedness, reducing the capacity to mitigate immediate effects and prolonging the recovery process. This delay in response not only leads to increased suffering and loss but also has long-term socio-economic repercussions for the affected communities.

Another critical point is the mismatch between policies formulated at the international level and the realities faced by local communities. This gap suggests a top-down approach in policy-making, often leading to a one-size-fits-all strategy that fails to consider the nuanced needs of different regions and communities. Effective climate action requires policies that are adaptable, locally informed, and sensitive to the specific contexts of the communities they aim to serve.

The insufficient focus on strengthening local capacities is also a matter of concern. Building resilience and self-sufficiency within local communities is essential for both immediate and long-term climate crisis management. However, there is often limited investment in empowering communities through education, resource allocation,

and development of local infrastructure. This neglect leaves communities dependent on external aid and more vulnerable to the recurring impacts of climate change. Lastly, the issue of inequitable resource distribution cannot be overstated. Resources allocated for climate crises often do not reach the most affected communities due to bureaucratic hurdles and mismanagement. This inefficiency and lack of transparency hinder the effective distribution of aid and exacerbate inequality and mistrust in the systems responsible for climate action.

Lastly, the overlooked aspect of community-driven solutions in COP28's decisions further compounds the challenges faced by African grassroots communities. The effectiveness of climate action is significantly enhanced when local communities, who are the first to experience and respond to climate impacts, are actively involved in shaping solutions. These communities possess invaluable indigenous knowledge and practical insights that are crucial for designing sustainable and culturally appropriate interventions.

However, the top-down approach prevalent in international climate negotiations often sidelines these local voices, leading to a disconnect between the formulated policies and their practical applicability. This oversight not only undermines the potential for impactful climate action but also diminishes the agency of African communities in addressing the climate crisis they are disproportionately affected by. Therefore, a reorientation towards a more bottom-up, community-centric approach in climate policy-making is imperative for ensuring effective, equitable, and sustainable solutions to the immediate and long-term challenges posed by climate change.



Bridging the Gap: From Global Pledges to Local Realities

*Philip owiti Dinga-Advocay and Partnership Lead,
AACJ*



Bridging the Gap: From Global Pledges to Local Realities

In the sprawling conference halls of COP28, global leaders and policymakers made ambitious pledges, addressing the urgent need for climate action. However, for the African continent, where the realities of climate change are lived daily, the key question is how these global pledges translate into actionable changes at the local level.

The Disconnect Between Pledges and Action

Global Ambitions vs. Local Needs: The pledges made at COP28 encompass broad, sweeping goals, often crafted with a global perspective that may not always align with the specific needs of African communities. For instance, commitments to reduce carbon emissions and transition to renewable energy, while crucial, don't immediately address the immediate needs of a farmer facing erratic rainfall patterns or a family dealing with the aftermath of a climate-induced disaster.

The Implementation Challenge: Even well-intentioned pledges face hurdles in implementation. Bureaucratic processes, lack of infrastructure, limited technical expertise, and financial constraints are just some of the barriers that can delay or dilute the effectiveness of these commitments at the grassroots level in Africa.

Case Studies: Successes and Shortcomings

Renewable Energy Projects: There have been successes, such as the growth of solar power initiatives in East Africa, driven by both international funding and local entrepreneurship. However, these successes are often countered by challenges in scalability and sustainability, underscoring the need for more tailored approaches that consider local socio-economic conditions.

Adaptation Efforts: In regions heavily impacted by drought and desertification, global funding for adaptation has facilitated water conservation projects and drought-resistant agriculture. Yet, the adaptation finance remains disproportionately low compared to mitigation funding, leaving many critical projects underfunded.

Voices from the Ground

The real measure of COP28's success lies in the voices of those at the frontline. Conversations with local community leaders, activists, and affected individuals often reveal a mixed picture. While there's appreciation for the growing international recognition of climate issues, there's also frustration over the slow pace of change and the gap between high-level promises and on-the-ground realities.

Bridging the Gap

Inclusive Policymaking: To bridge this gap, there's a growing call for more inclusive policymaking processes that incorporate input from local communities and stakeholders in Africa. This approach ensures that global pledges are grounded in local realities.

Strengthening Local Capacities: Empowering local governments and organizations with the resources and skills necessary to implement climate initiatives is crucial. This means not only providing financial support but also investing in capacity building, technical training, and knowledge exchange.

Monitoring and Accountability: Establishing robust mechanisms to monitor the progress of pledged initiatives and holding entities accountable for their commitments is essential to ensure that global promises translate into local actions.

As the dust settles post-COP28, the real work begins on the ground in Africa. Bridging the gap between global pledges and local realities requires a concerted, collaborative effort that respects and responds to the diverse needs of the continent. It's a journey of turning global commitments into local actions, where every step forward, no matter how small, marks progress in the fight against climate change. For Africa, the successful translation of these pledges into tangible changes can make the difference between merely surviving the climate crisis and thriving in spite of it.

The Silent Emergency: Climate Change and Marginalized Communities

The Silent Emergency: Climate Change and Marginalized Communities

In the intricate web of global climate discourse, one alarming pattern persists – the voices of marginalized communities, those most acutely affected by climate change, remain conspicuously underrepresented. This article adopts an analytical lens to explore the nexus between climate change and its disproportionate impact on these communities, often sidelined in high-level environmental policy dialogues.

Dissecting the Disproportionate Impact

Vulnerability and Exposure: Marginalized communities, encompassing indigenous groups, low-income populations, and remote inhabitants, often find themselves on the front lines of climate adversity. Their heightened vulnerability is not just a product of geographical exposure but also a result of socio-economic factors, including limited access to resources, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of political representation.

Adaptive Capacity: The capacity to adapt to climate change is largely contingent on economic and social resources. Marginalized communities, grappling with systemic inequities, inherently possess less adaptive capacity. This lack of resilience translates into an amplified susceptibility to climate hazards – from intensified droughts and erratic weather patterns to devastating floods and land erosion.

Analyzing Policy Gaps

Representation in Climate Policy: Global climate negotiations, such as those witnessed in COP28, often do not adequately reflect the priorities and challenges of marginalized groups. The result is a policy landscape that is skewed towards broader, more generic solutions, which may not address the specific needs of these communities.

Access to Climate Finance: The distribution of climate finance is another area where disparities are evident. Despite the international community's pledge to support vulnerable populations, the flow of funds often bypasses the most marginalized, either due to bureaucratic complexities or misaligned funding priorities.

The Path Forward: Integrating Marginalized Voices

Community-Led Solutions: For climate strategies to be effective, they must be rooted in the experiences and knowledge of those they aim to assist. Incorporating community-led solutions and traditional knowledge can lead to more sustainable and culturally appropriate climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.

Enhancing Direct Access to Funding: Streamlining access to climate finance for marginalized communities is crucial. This involves simplifying application processes, increasing direct funding opportunities, and building capacity within these communities to effectively utilize funds.

Inclusive Policy Making: Policymakers must ensure that climate policies are crafted with the direct input of marginalized groups. This inclusive approach not only enriches policy outcomes but also ensures a fairer representation of diverse needs and perspectives.

The intersection of climate change and marginalized communities represents a silent emergency, one that calls for immediate and inclusive action. As the world grapples with the escalating climate crisis, it becomes increasingly imperative to bring these sidelined voices to the forefront of global climate dialogues. Only then can we hope to achieve genuine climate justice that transcends societal boundaries and addresses the needs of all, especially those who are most at risk.

sokhna DIÉ KA

Natural Justice Coordinator, Senegal





**Green Promises: Scrutinizing
COP28's Commitment to
Renewable Energy in Africa**

The pledges for renewable energy made at COP28 have been hailed as green promises for a sustainable future, with a first explicit call on nations to transition from fossil fuels. This article takes an analytical approach to examine these commitments and assess their potential impact on the African energy landscape, where the need for sustainable energy solutions is both urgent and critical.

Assessing the Renewable Energy Pledges

Scope of Commitments: COP28 saw various countries and international organizations pledge to increase investments in renewable energy, signaling a recognition of the gravity of the situation and a willingness to take action. For Africa, these promises are crucial, given its vast renewable potential and is home to most of the critical minerals needed for the global energy transition. However, the magnitude and specificity of these pledges vary, with no clear targets, raising questions about their feasibility and potential impact.

Potential Impact: If realized, these commitments could significantly alter Africa's energy landscape. Currently, many African nations rely heavily on fossil fuels and biomass for energy. Transitioning to renewables could not only reduce emissions but also increase energy access in remote and underdeveloped areas, fostering economic development.

Analyzing the Challenges

Infrastructure and Investment: One of the biggest challenges in realizing these renewable energy pledges is the lack of infrastructure and investment. Many African countries face financial constraints that hinder the development of renewable energy projects. The pledges at COP28 need to translate into actual financial support and technical assistance.

Policy and Regulatory Frameworks: The success of renewable energy initiatives also hinges on supportive policy and regulatory frameworks. Inconsistent policies and regulatory hurdles can deter investment and impede the growth of the renewable energy sector.

Capacity Building and Technology Transfer: For sustainable implementation, there is a need for capacity building and technology transfer to ensure that African countries can manage and maintain renewable energy systems effectively.

The Road Ahead

Strengthening International Partnerships: Fulfilling COP28's renewable energy promises requires strong international collaboration. Partnerships between African nations and developed countries can facilitate the transfer of technology and expertise, as well as concessional finance mechanisms.

Inclusive and Sustainable Development: Integrating renewable energy development with broader socio-economic goals is vital. This includes ensuring that renewable energy projects create local jobs, support community development, and do not harm the environment or local communities.

Localizing Energy Solutions: Adopting and implementing renewable energy solutions that are responsive to local contexts is crucial. This includes considering the geographic, cultural, and economic specifics of different regions within Africa.

The renewable energy pledges and initiatives announced at COP28 offer a glimmer of hope for transforming Africa's energy landscape. However, turning these pledges into reality will require concerted efforts, including significant investment, supportive policies, and international cooperation. The road ahead is challenging, but with strategic planning and commitment, these green promises can usher in a new era of sustainable development for Africa.

THEY SAID:



“
Everyone fighting against the global climate crisis has little to celebrate from this disappointing COP28. Its final outcome is grossly inadequate. Oil, coal and gas won again, but they had to struggle harder to do so and their era is nearing its end.”

Nafkote Dabi
Oxfam International's Climate Change Policy Lead



“
Women's voices are key to unlocking true climate change solutions. Ignoring women in climate talks is a critical strategic failure, weakening our collective ability to create resilient, inclusive, and effective environmental policies for a healthier planet.”

Memory Kachambwa
Executive Director of Femnet



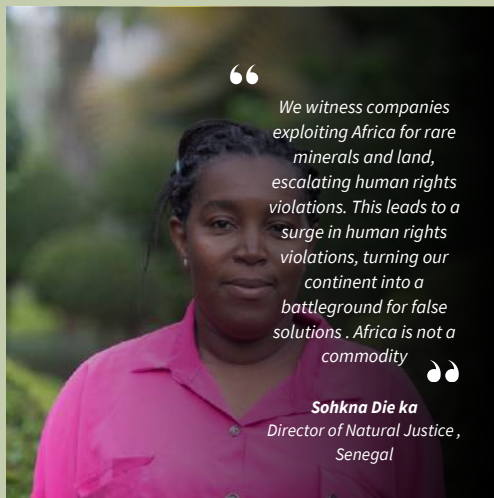
“
The disappointing finale of the Dubai Climate Change Conference echoes the recurring letdowns of the UNFCCC multilateral process, leaving millions in Africa and worldwide vulnerable to the harsh realities of climate change.”

Dr. Mithika Mwenda
Executive Director of PACJA



“
We reiterate that adaptation is a key priority for Africa and a critical component in the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Adaptation is a matter of survival for us in Africa.”

Collins Nzovu,
Zambia's Minister for Green Economy and Environment



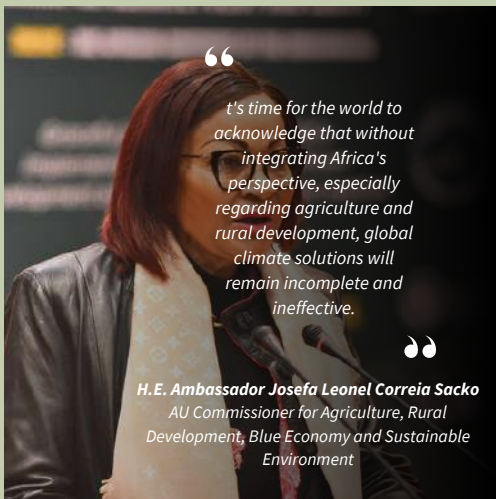
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We witness companies exploiting Africa for rare minerals and land, escalating human rights violations. This leads to a surge in human rights violations, turning our continent into a battleground for false solutions. Africa is not a commodity.”

Sohkna Die ka
Director of Natural Justice, Senegal



“
Africa, contributing just 3% to global carbon emissions, faces severe climate impacts, losing billions annually. Needing far more than the received climate adaptation aid, African farmers, largely uninsured and reliant on dryland farming, are particularly vulnerable. They depend on prayer against unpredictable weather, pests, and market fluctuations.”

Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina
AFDB President



“
It's time for the world to acknowledge that without integrating Africa's perspective, especially regarding agriculture and rural development, global climate solutions will remain incomplete and ineffective.”

H.E. Ambassador Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko
AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment



“
The dire consequences of climate change, exemplified by the cholera crisis in Malawi, demand immediate financial accountability from those primarily responsible for these environmental changes. It's essential that these entities step up, providing substantial support to strengthen our healthcare systems, battered by the relentless impacts of their actions on our climate.”

Hon. Khumbize Kandodo Chiponda, MP.
Minister of Health, Malawi



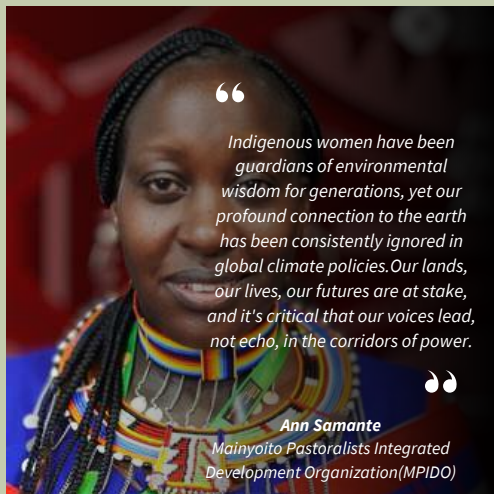
“
Decisions made in far-off halls of power fail to grasp the complexities and challenges we encounter every day on our farms. It's time for a paradigm shift where ground realities guide policy-making, not the other way around. Policies must be rooted in the soil of our experiences, not in the abstract air of conference rooms.”

Tahjic Farmer, Ethio



“
We, women farmers, are not mere victims of climate change; we are custodians of practical, adaptive solutions. Yet, time and again, external solutions are imposed on us without our consultation, disregarding our deep understanding and experience. It's high time that our voices are heard and our knowledge respected in formulating climate policies. True change will only happen when those at the grassroots are leading the way, not being led.”

Adanna
Agungji community Nigeria



“
Indigenous women have been guardians of environmental wisdom for generations, yet our profound connection to the earth has been consistently ignored in global climate policies. Our lands, our lives, our futures are at stake, and it's critical that our voices lead, not echo, in the corridors of power.”

Ann Samante
Mainyitto Pastoralists Integrated Development Organization (MPIDO)



“
I demand that our leaders not only recognize but actively engage with the innovative ideas of youth in tackling climate change. We are more than just the future; we are the present, bringing fresh perspectives and urgency to the climate crisis. Our solutions come from living the reality of a warming planet, and it's time for those in power to listen, collaborate, and implement our ideas in real-time policy decisions.”

Moussa Fara Diop
AYC Senegal