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## POLICY INSIGHT

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# Promoting an African food systems agenda at COP28

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### Summary

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At the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28), it is imperative for African countries to foster unity and collaboration with other developing nations to realise successful outcomes for the continent's food systems transformation agenda.

Key resources for the Africa Group of Negotiators and other key stakeholders include the African Union Climate Strategy and the Nairobi Declaration to identify concrete priorities and actions for climate-resilient agriculture in Africa.

The Eastern Africa Farmer's Federation (EAFF) has issued a Call to Action for COP28, outlining priority action areas crucial for advancing Africa's food systems.



## These priorities include:

- Advocating for significant progress in the agricultural negotiating track of climate negotiations.
- Ensuring that adaptation remains a focal point in all COP28 decisions and initiatives.
- Promoting the inclusion of agricultural targets in the Global Goal on Adaptation.
- Substantially increasing financing to support climate action in agri-food systems.
- Guaranteeing the Loss and Damage Fund provides adequate support to frontline communities and secures financial pledges.
- Urgently enhancing ambition and increasing the overall global collective effort to climate change.

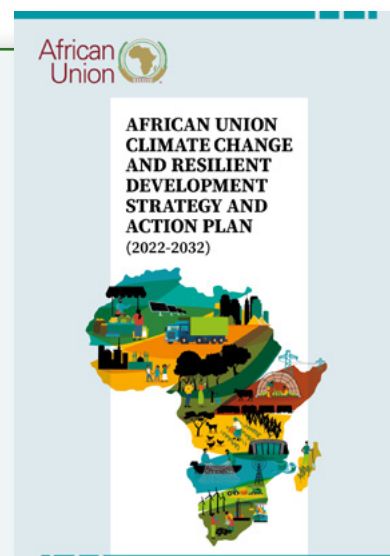
These action areas are well aligned with the central food system commitments made in the Nairobi Declaration and the priority interventions of the AU Climate Strategy which are explored in detail and structured accordingly in this policy insight.



## Introduction to COP28, the Nairobi Declaration, and the African Union Climate Change Strategy

At the end of November 2023, the world will be eagerly anticipating the outcomes of the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28), an annual meeting held under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention (UNFCCC). During this event, nations convene to address escalating challenges of climate and energy. Africa, guided by the recently developed [Nairobi Declaration](#), has clearly articulated its wishes and desires for a successful and equitable COP28. The Nairobi Declaration builds on the [African Union's Climate Change and Resilient Strategy and Action Plan \(2022-2032\)](#) (the AU Climate Strategy), serving as an important platform for the continent to form partnerships around its key climate priorities.

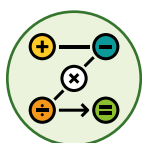
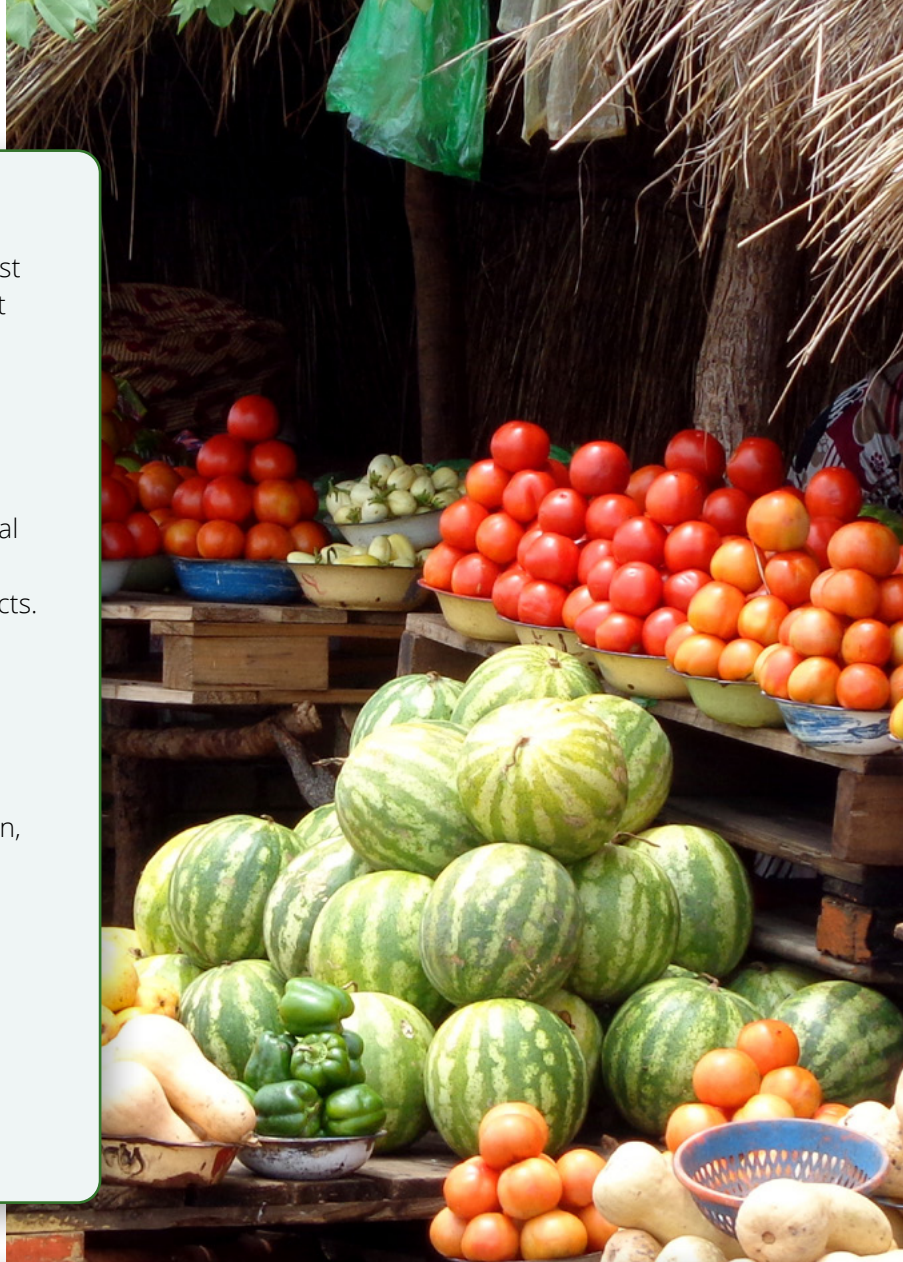
Both the AU Climate Strategy and the Nairobi Declaration set the stage for COP28, amplifying African voices globally and urging



acknowledgment and urgent attention to continent's needs. Building on the successful adoption of the continent's first climate change strategy and building on the momentum created at its first continental climate summit, Africa – as the world's most climate-vulnerable continent – looks to COP28 to take concrete and tangible steps to address resilience-building and financing priorities highlighted in these significant policy milestones. COP28 needs to deliver tangible, actionable commitments to sustain momentum and keep trust-based partnerships alive. These include accelerated financing, debt restructuring, more favourable lending facilities for developing countries, and robust private-public partnerships to drive

an ambitious agenda. Most importantly, a successful COP28 will prioritise a socially just outcome for Africa, with financial delivery at its core.

Climate change continues to have impacts on food systems, causing production losses, nutrient deficiencies, environmental hazards, human displacement, and potential for conflict. Support to climate-resilient agriculture is key to addressing these impacts. Agriculture will be high on the agenda at the upcoming climate conference with the COP28 Presidency organising a series of thematic days focused on promoting food security, increased agriculture productivity, reduced losses in the food production chain, enhanced resilience and livelihoods for smallholder farmers and management of potential food crises. Both the AU Climate Strategy and the Nairobi Declaration are crucial resources for the Africa Group of Negotiators and other key stakeholders to identify concrete priorities and actions for climate-resilient agriculture in Africa.



## Outcomes of the Africa Climate Summit and the Nairobi Declaration

Africa's priorities have been established and clearly articulated ahead of COP28. In September 2023, the first Africa Climate Summit was convened in Nairobi, Kenya. Its outcome document, the Nairobi Declaration, outlines the key priorities framing the continent's climate agenda, which forms the basis of Africa's position in the upcoming negotiations. These priorities, reiterated from COP27, include a call for global financial reforms, stronger commitments from development partners to help Africa meet its climate finance needs, more ambitious and rapid climate action under the Paris Agreement, continued support for the adaptation and loss

and damage agenda, and increased investment in Africa's just energy transition. The Nairobi Declaration positions Africa as a central player in the global climate discourse, highlighting its potential as a strategic partner in a global climate solution and a leader in a low-carbon energy transition. This is to be achieved by utilising and scaling its vast renewable energy resources and significant reserves of critical minerals, pursuing green industrialisation, and leveraging its young and growing population to champion its climate agenda that supports innovative, low-carbon solutions.



## Overview of the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy (2022-2032)

In February 2022, the AU Heads of State and Government adopted the Climate Strategy, a significant achievement for the continent laying the foundation for joint climate action at the continental level. Serving as a common framework, the Strategy enables African countries to pursue a collective climate change and resilient development agenda, fostering partnerships and rallying support for its implementation.

The AU Climate Strategy importantly aligns its policies with Africa's negotiating position at official UNFCCC COP meetings. For example, the Strategy supports the viewpoints of the [Africa Group of Negotiators \(AGN\)](#) by aligning with their key priorities and action areas, such as adaptation, resilience building, and a call for increased climate finance and means of implementation support. A common Strategy is important in the climate negotiations to inform Africa's key negotiating bodies. Simultaneously, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – who holds the COP Presidency - and the African Union Commission will work together to achieve common positions and support the awareness creation of the Strategy's goals and objectives.

The Strategy supports the commitments made by African countries under the 2015 UNFCCC Paris Agreement and is guided by the existing national climate efforts and aspirations of its 55 Member States, as expressed through Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plans, and long-term, climate-resilient development and decarbonisation visions. This also includes long-term adaptation goals contained in national Long-Term Strategies.

The Strategy focuses on several issues related to enhancing Africa's response to climate impacts and ensuring low-carbon, climate resilient growth. This includes challenges related to governance and policy, the identification of eight transformative pathways for sustainable development (with one pathway specifically dedicated to food systems transformation), enhancing the means of implementation, and supporting Africa's existing regional initiatives. The Strategy identifies priority areas and suggests concrete steps to take under each of these pillars.

### VISION

A sustainable, prosperous, equitable and climate- resilient Africa.

### GOAL

To provide a continental framework for collective action and enhanced cooperation in addressing climate change issues that improves livelihoods and well-being, promotes adaptation capacity, and achieves low-emission, sustainable economic growth.

### OVERALL OBJECTIVE

Building the resilience of African communities, ecosystems and economies, and supporting regional adaptation.

1

Strengthening the adaptive capacity of affected communities and managing the risks related to climate change.

2

Pursuing equitable and transformative low emission, climate-resilient development pathways.

3

Enhancing Africa's capacity to mobilise resources and improve access to and development of technology for ambitious climate action.

4

Enhancing inclusion, alignment, cooperation, and ownership of climate strategies, policies, programmes and plans across all spheres of government and stakeholder groupings.



## STRATEGIC INTERVENTION AXES

- 1 Strategic Intervention Axis 1:** Strengthening Policy and Governance
- 2 Strategic Intervention Axis 2:** Pathways towards Transformative Climate-Resilient Development
- 3 Strategic Intervention Axis 3:** Enhancing Implementation towards Climate-Resilient Development
- 4 Strategic Intervention Axis 4:** Leveraging Regional Flagship Initiatives



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1** A People Centred Approach
- 2** Conserving and restoring natural capital
- 3** Aligning plans and priorities
- 4** Leave no one behind/a just transition
- 5** Evidence and practice
- 6** African-led and African-owned
- 7** Whole of economy approach
- 8** Intersectionality
- 9** Common but differentiated approach



## METHODOLOGY – A PEOPLE CENTRED APPROACH

Regional stakeholder and outreach meetings hosted by the African Union Commission in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Extensive feedback was received from key stakeholders from various Regional Economic Communities, academia, United Nations agencies and civil society organisations.

Multiple sectoral experts were directly approached for their specific input.



## CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

### AFRICA'S CLIMATIC CHANGE CONDITIONS AND VULNERABILITY

**Aridity** – Africa is the driest continent with 45% of its land mass falling under dry lands. Climate-change induced water stress is projected to affect up to 700 million people.

**Extreme heat** - Since 1797, the number of extreme hot days in Africa have increased sevenfold.

**Extreme events** - Africa is likely to experience an increase in droughts in several regions. Heavy precipitation events and associated flooding are projected to increase in frequency and intensity almost everywhere in Africa.



### AFRICA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents due to its high exposure and low adaptive capacity. Improving the continent's climate resilience is key to unlocking its development potential.

- Demographics** - highest rate of population growth globally in the coming decades, youth bulge, urban population growth, dietary transitions and health risks, food insecurity
- Gender inequality** – Africa is the least gender equal region globally, women have less political, social and economic power than men
- Poverty** - high and persistent levels of extreme poverty particularly in rural areas
- Economic growth** - low levels of economic growth and high levels of inequality in access to key productive assets
- Land degradation** – a major constraint to raising the continent's agricultural productivity
- Energy access** – low levels of access to energy particularly in rural areas



### KEY SECTORAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE

**Multiple sectoral challenges and opportunities are identified, some include:**

#### Food systems, health and nutrition

**Challenges:** decline in major crop yields, decline in livestock productivity and production, changes in pests and diseases distribution and occurrence, income vulnerability increasing food insecurity, under- and malnutrition and associated health risks, reduced labour productivity

**Opportunities:** infrastructure development, digital technology, policy innovations, ICT-enabled farming, climate-resilient crops and breeds, research and innovation

#### Energy and infrastructure

**Challenges:** damage to infrastructure, reduced operating efficiency, increased energy demand, reduced hydropower output, unequal access – women and girls

**Opportunities:** a global political commitment that goes beyond extraction, innovative and interdisciplinary approaches, energy justice framework, research and development, renewable energy technologies, off-grid solutions, policy frameworks and programmes

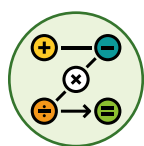
#### Blue economy

**Challenges:** coastal erosion, sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, coral bleaching, biodiversity loss, habitat loss, reduced fish stock, loss of tourism, loss of livelihoods

**Opportunities:** ecosystem-based adaptation approaches, mangrove restoration, mapping and analysis of ecosystems services, integrated coastal zone management, ecosystem-based governance, research, existing regional institutions and programmes, joint implementation

African countries have a common vision in this continental strategy and plan. It provides an important milestone and gives the continent the opportunity to join forces at the upcoming 'African

COP' to ensure any engagement at the conference is representative of Africa's low-carbon, climate resilient sustainable development future.



## Leveraging COP28 to ensure progress on food and agriculture within the climate change policy arena

Accounting for approximately 34% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions<sup>1</sup> and concurrently supporting the livelihoods and income generation of approximately half of the global population, it is imperative to ensure a just transition toward sustainable and resilient food systems. This imperative is rooted in its significance for both climate-related objectives and developmental outcomes. Food systems and land use present a dual challenge and opportunity in addressing climate change. While food systems are a substantial contributor to the climate crisis and are highly susceptible to climate impacts, they also harbour untapped potential for adaptation and mitigation. The failure to effectively harness this potential, coupled with a lack of expeditious and comprehensive measures to radically transform our food systems, poses a substantial risk. Such inaction may lead to the surpassing of the 1.5°C temperature target, thereby triggering cascading impacts for food and nutrition security, as well as adversely impacting livelihoods and income generation<sup>2</sup>.

In this light, the UAE COP28 Presidency has placed food systems transformation at the core of the COP agenda and is preparing the "Emirates Declaration on Resilient Food Systems, Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Action" for the global event. The Emirates Declaration aims to commit signatories of the Nairobi Declaration to accelerating the integration of food systems and agriculture into their climate action programmes

and to mainstream climate action across policy agendas related to food systems and agriculture. The official signing of the Nairobi Declaration is expected to take place at the beginning of COP28 (1st December 2023).

This prioritisation of food systems at COP28 is welcomed by Africa, as the effects of climate change on the continent's food systems are systemic and projected to leave at least 30 million more people at risk of hunger by 2030<sup>3</sup>. Agriculture still forms the backbone of the economies of many African countries, and food systems currently contribute 62% of the continent's employment<sup>4</sup>. As such, efforts to strengthen the climate resilience of Africa's food systems are ongoing and critical.

A [Call to Action for COP28 by the Eastern Africa Farmer's Federation \(EAFF\)](#) provides priority action areas pertaining to Africa's food systems which hope to be realised at COP28 including:

- Advocating for significant progress in the agricultural negotiating track of the climate negotiations.
- Ensuring that adaptation remains prominent in all COP28 decisions and initiatives.
- Promoting the inclusion of agricultural targets in the Global Goal on Adaptation.

1 Crippa M, Solazzo E, Guizzardi D. et al. 2021. Food systems are responsible for a third of global anthropogenic GHG emissions. *Nat Food* 2, 198–209. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-021-00225-9>.

2 Ivanovich CC, Sun T, Gordon DR, et al. 2023. Future warming from global food consumption. *Nat. Clim. Chang.* 13, 297–302. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-023-01605-8>.

3 AUDA-NEPAD. 2023. [Africa Common Position on Food Systems](#). A summary of the official Africa Common Position presented in September 2021 as part of the United Nations Food Systems Summit - Information Note.

4 FAO. 2023. [Almost half the world's population lives in households linked to agrifood systems](#). Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

- Substantially increasing financing to support climate action in agri-food systems.
- Guaranteeing the Loss and Damage Fund will provide adequate support to frontline communities and secure financial pledges.
- Urgently enhancing ambition and increasing the overall global collective effort to climate change.

These action areas are well aligned with the central food system commitments made in the Nairobi Declaration and the priority intervention and action areas of the AU Climate Strategy. This

policy insight draws upon these priority action areas and other cross-cutting issues, describing the relevant commitments and intervention areas given in the Nairobi Declaration and the AU Climate Strategy, to support and strengthen the case for Africa's climate resilient food systems transformation agenda at COP28 (see Annex 1 for the consolidated list of relevant commitments and intervention areas). The AICCRA Policy brief on [“Accelerating implementation of the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan \(2022-2032\) through the Nairobi Declaration commitments”](#) was a key resource for undertaking this analysis.



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## FOOD SYSTEMS

The food systems agenda of COP28 is well aligned with the AU Climate Strategy which places emphasis on food systems as a key action area. In Axis 2, the AU Climate Strategy stresses the importance of food systems transformation to address food insecurity and poverty in the face of climate change. It indicates the need to intensify efforts to meet international commitments such as those relating to biodiversity and land health (e.g. Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity). It

describes how the continent's food systems are under increasing pressure from climate change and yet the demand for more food of better quality is increasing. It underscores the need for national and regional organisations and governments to address the negative impacts of food systems on the environment and natural resources, and the need for biophysical, social and ecological performance indicators to be monitored to ensure progress towards the continent's food system targets. It states that research and innovation needs

to focus on addressing the challenges faced by farmers, and that farmers should be at the centre of transformation agendas. Some of the key intervention areas relevant to food systems include:

- Promote the equitable sharing of climate risk and reward amongst all food system actors, especially small-scale, rural farmers.
- Enhance resilience of food systems against climate effects, while emphasising nutrition outcomes and integrated planning.
- Emphasise production toward agroecological transition, to reduce GHG intensity (including methane and other gases), and dependencies on external inputs.
- Strengthen food system governance interventions across Africa's regions.
- Strengthen finance, investment and resource allocation interventions.
- Develop bankable solutions for ecosystem protection/restoration, sustainable water resources management and regenerative agriculture.



## LOSS AND DAMAGE FUND

Loss and damage presents an outstanding economic and political challenge for African countries. Current and projected costs to address loss and damage are immense; even if all cost-effective adaptation is realised, Africa will still experience significant residual damages, which are calculated at double the adaptation costs for the period 2030-2050<sup>5</sup>. These residual damages are undermining Africa's development effort and will continue to do so into the future. COP28 provides an opportunity for African countries, in collaboration with global civil society organisations and sympathetic partners from the global North, to operationalise the COP27 decision on

- Build technical capacity for implementing and investing in regenerative and biodiversity positive agricultural systems across the region.
- Restore and sustainably manage agricultural systems (including crop and livestock systems) to reduce and remove GHG emissions, reduce human-wildlife conflict, enhance food security and water regulation benefits.
- Ensure focus on food security, land-use rights and protection of biodiversity in projects for ecosystem-based approaches to carbon removal.

Although food systems are not featured prominently in the Nairobi Declaration, it does commit countries to renew their efforts in enhancing agricultural yields through sustainable agricultural practices so as to improve food security and minimise negative environmental impacts. It also emphasises the need to focus economic development plans on climate-positive growth, such as through climate-smart and restorative agricultural practices and to support smallholder farmers in their roles as land stewards.

establishing the Loss and Damage Fund. This is aligned with the Nairobi Declaration which calls for the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund.

Critical to the resilience of Africa's food systems is ensuring the Loss and Damage Fund reaches vulnerable communities on the frontline and compensates them for the acute as well as slow onset of disasters that lead to losses and damages. Amongst these most vulnerable communities are smallholder farmers, the livelihoods of which are particularly affected by climate disasters such as droughts, floods and

5 Powershift Africa. 2023. [Defining an African Agenda for COP28](#).



pest and disease outbreaks. It will therefore be critical to implement loss and damage mechanisms that benefit smallholder farmers by ensuring finance is adequately channelled to ground-level actors and implementers. Axis 2 of the AU Climate Strategy stresses this need with an intervention area on promoting the equitable

sharing of climate risk and reward amongst all food system actors, especially smallholder farmers. It specifically addresses the need to improve farmers access to climate-related insurance products as well as innovative risk-sharing mechanisms.



## ADAPTATION

### Adaptation action

Climate negotiations are dominated by mitigation-centric discussions and finance is still flowing largely to mitigation-related projects. At COP28 and beyond, prioritising adaptation approaches that are gender sensitive and equity-based is essential. This means supporting actions that enhance resilience, such as social safety nets, crop and livestock insurance, early warning systems, basic infrastructure and health services, water access and supply management, and climate-smart technologies and agroecological approaches. It requires the scaling of sustainable land management practices and technologies to support local initiatives, co-created with farmers, that are practical, applicable and of benefit to grassroot-level communities. Supporting

adaptation amongst smallholder farmers also requires an effective enabling environment where policy makers have addressed barriers to effective adaptation, such as insufficient finance; governance challenges and slow policy reform; a lack of adaptive capacity; insufficient climate information and early warning systems; and difficulties in scaling climate-smart technologies<sup>6</sup>. There is a need to prioritise investment in Africa- and farmer-led innovation, research and development to enable communities and vulnerable populations to create and adopt appropriate resilience planning tools and actions. The inclusion of traditional and local knowledge will be imperative to contextualised, effective solutions.

6 EAFF. 2023. [The Call to Action](#). Eastern Africa Farmer's Federation (EAFF).

The Nairobi Declaration prioritises adaptation by committing African Heads of State and Government to “identify, prioritise, and mainstream adaptation into development policymaking and planning, including in the context of Nationally Determined Contributions”. It also indicates the need for climate-positive growth through climate-smart and restorative agricultural practices and to support smallholder farmers, indigenous people and local communities in the transition. To achieve this mention is made of the need for improved access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies. Further, the Nairobi Declaration makes special mention of drought adaptation and the importance of shifting from crisis management to proactive drought preparedness.

To enhance the enabling environment for adaptation the Nairobi Declaration addresses the need for capacity development through investment in reskilling and to enhance the inclusive approach by engaging with children, youth, women, persons living with disabilities, indigenous people, and communities in climate vulnerable situations. It highlights the need to strengthen early warning systems and climate information services to enable proactivity to protect lives, livelihoods, and assets and to inform long-term decision-making related to climate change risks. It emphasises the need for including indigenous knowledge and citizen science in adaptation strategies and early warning systems.

The AU Climate Strategy is similarly focused on strengthening adaptation and building the resilience of member states to reduce the vulnerability of affected communities and climate-related risks. It prioritises research and innovation to provide solutions to the challenges faced by farmers, which relate to policies, institutions, and society in general. It reinforces the need for an appropriate enabling environment, ensuring that the required finance, markets, capacity development, policy and regulatory frameworks, and social safety nets are in place. The AU Climate Strategy also emphasises the need to engage with frontline communities, particularly smallholder farmers, who are greatly exposed to climate risk and need to be at the centre of the food systems transformation agenda. It notes that central to the

challenge is inclusion, the equitable distribution of risks and benefits across food systems, and a focus on gender, youth empowerment, and rural employment. Some of the relevant intervention areas and recommended actions include:

- Establish a climate-risk insurance facility at a regional level to which every food systems player contributes, directly or indirectly.
- Enhance availability of and access to appropriate climate-related insurance products to farmers, as well as novel risk-sharing mechanisms like risk pooling and other innovative models.
- Extend use of smart, innovative and climate-resilient technologies, renewable energy production, breed/variety development/switching and technologies that preserve and enhance nutritional qualities in food.
- Support research, extension and implementation of public sector and market-based instruments toward agroecological, regenerative, nature-based and indigenous approaches for integrated farming and pastoral systems or resilient landscapes).
- Provide resources to enable/facilitate the transition to more nature positive production systems by farmers.
- Conduct systematic review of existing policies, strategies and incentive mechanisms that support/inhibit transition to sustainable food systems.
- Modify policies, processes and strategies to become more inclusive and participatory and support sub-national scales of food systems governance while linking them with resources and authority to national level.

### **Adaptation funding**

Climate change adaptation is imperative to Africa's sustainable development pathway. However, adaptation interventions receive minimal attention and financial resources in comparison to mitigation initiatives. This is despite the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement committing



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developed nations to support developing countries in addressing the costs associated with adapting to the adverse effects of climate change. Furthermore, investing in adaptation is economically advantageous, as allocating USD 1.8 trillion to adaptation endeavours between 2020 and 2030 could yield benefits exceeding USD 7.1 trillion. This economic advantage is particularly evident in Africa, where adaptation actions present a valuable investment opportunity, offering a triple reward of averting losses, fostering economic gains, and engendering positive social and environmental benefits. However, concerns persist amongst African countries that the current provision of climate finance for adaptation is woefully inadequate to counteract the escalating impacts of climate change in developing nations. Research underscores that proactively enhancing finance and investments for adaptation is more cost-effective than reactively addressing severe crises. Furthermore, the limited support for adaptation is typically in the form of high-risk loans, exacerbating the continent's financial burden. Africa advocates for adaptation assistance in the form of low-risk concessional loans and grants paid within appropriate timeframes.

COP28 therefore presents a critical opportunity for governments, businesses, and investors to collaboratively address barriers to finance and devise strategies for unlocking immediate action on adaptation. At the Africa Climate Summit,

leaders indicated the need to accelerate climate adaptation at scale in Africa. It was noted that the adaptation finance needed to deliver the continent's Nationally Determined Contributions is the highest globally. Africa needs a minimum of USD 56 billion annually for adaptation by 2030. However, these funding needs are likely underestimated, and Africa may actually need up to USD 1.7 trillion for climate adaptation to 2035. Currently, Africa's adaptation finance flows are vastly inefficient, for example in 2019-2020, only USD 11.4 billion was committed to adaptation activities in Africa and it is projected that international climate adaptation finance will only amount to USD 182.4 billion by 2035. Such a failure in adaptation funding is expected to cost Africa USD 6 trillion in economic benefits by 2035<sup>7</sup>.

Furthermore, it was indicated that over half of adaptation finance committed to Africa in 2019-2020 was in the form of loans, which exacerbates the debt crisis. This also means that Africa is paying back the adaptation finance. The need for grant-based funding was noted as being particularly important as well as funding support from the private sector. Commitments around adaptation funding in the Nairobi Declaration included the need to prioritise, and mainstream adaptation into development policymaking and planning and to build effective partnerships between Africa and other regions to meet financial support needs.

7 GCA. 2023. [Africa's adaptation transformation: Doubling down through Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program \(AAP\) Compacts](#). Global Centre on Adaptation.

The AU Climate Strategy supports this priority area, noting Africa's struggle in accessing climate finance for adaptation and how the Paris Agreement is clear on the need for developed countries to provide financial support to developing countries and the need to balance mitigation and adaptation finance. It highlights that international finance allocated for the period 2014-2018, predominantly targeted mitigation (USD 30.6 billion) as opposed to adaptation (USD 16.5 billion). The intervention area of Axis 3 on enhanced finance flows and resource mobilisation indicates the need to balance mitigation and adaptation finance with the following suggested actions:

- Prioritise predictable and sustainable finance for adaptation at scale.
- Ensure that adaptation finance is delivered on a grant basis.
- Address the decline in grant finance and the climate-related increasing debt burden of many African countries.



## CLIMATE FINANCE

The success of COP28 will depend largely upon its capacity to facilitate the transfer of funds from wealthy nations to those most in need, and this process must occur at a pace and scale commensurate with the exigencies of the climate crisis. A pivotal point of contention at COP28 revolves around the failure of the developed world to fulfil its commitment to mobilise USD 100 billion annually in finance by 2020. In addition to meeting this target, developed nations must articulate plans for its augmentation beyond 2025.

The increasing occurrence of climate disasters and shocks exacerbates the fiscal constraints and social vulnerabilities faced by numerous African countries, exerting debilitating effects on their sustainable development endeavours. Developing countries necessitate a minimum of USD 6 trillion by 2030 to fulfil less than half of their existing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). However, despite the commitment to paying USD

## Global Goal on Adaptation

There is a need to include agriculture-specific targets, indicators, and metrics in the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) framework to ensure adaptation action is quantifiable and reportable. The Africa Group of Negotiators proposed a GGA target, aiming to “achieve 100% coverage of multi-hazard early warning systems and climate information services and response systems by 2027.” This includes enhancing “the adaptive capacity and resilience of the global population to the adverse impacts of climate change by at least 50% by 2030, and by at least 90% by 2050,” as well as reducing “the impacts of climate change by increasing adaptation action and support, by at least 30% by 2030”. This aligns with the Nairobi Declaration’s call for resolve for a measurable Global Goal on Adaptation with indicators and targets to enable the assessment of progress against the negative impacts of climate change.

100 billion annually, the actual flow of climate finance from developed to developing countries in 2020 ranged between USD 21 billion and USD 83.3 billion.

The Nairobi Declaration emphasises the need to mobilise finances for development and climate action. It calls for concrete, time-bound action on proposals to reform the multilateral financial system. The Nairobi Declaration urges developed countries to honour their commitment to pay USD 100 billion in annual climate finance, as pledged at COP15 in Copenhagen. It calls for the restructuring of the global finance architecture, including debt relief, to make funds more accessible for climate change action and to support Africa's net zero transition. The need to implement structural reform priorities was underscored. These priorities are detailed in the Bridgetown Initiative, the Accra-Marrakech Agenda, the United Nations Secretary-General's

Sustainable Development Goal Stimulus Proposal and the International Financial Architecture reform roadmap defined at the Paris Summit for a New Global Financing Pact .

The AU Climate Strategy provides targeted financial interventions for food systems transformation with the following action areas:

- Coordinate and augment investments by channelling flows toward sustainable food systems from philanthropy, private sector direct investment, and multi-lateral donors.
- De-risk investment toward transition by distribution roles across philanthropic, public and private finance by avoiding single source funds; ensure better coverage across short- and long-term investing; maintain balance of risk to investors across spectrum of scales; ensure that ESG and social impact investment reporting by private sector is well monitored and promoted.
- Analyse subsidy and investment programmes to ensure that direct payment schemes for food

system actors are aimed toward sustainable food systems transformation.

- Assess how financial and non-monetary incentives are applied to shift behaviours into more resilient, collaborative and integrated approaches.
- Draw from cross-value chain initiative models that recognise and remunerate champions of transformation – highlighting successes (for examples, Beacons of Hope, Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and Rockefeller Food System Vision Prize).
- Support development of market-based mechanisms to reward social and environmental outcomes (Ecosystem outcome verification, bundling of ecosystem services with carbon markets for agriculture sector, etc.).
- Explore and establish innovative mechanisms that enhance availability and access to financial resources (both mitigation and adaptation) by farmers, such as soil carbon management carbon dioxide removal.





## TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

Science and innovation in agriculture needs to be at the forefront of Africa's climate-resilient development agenda. Digital technologies have a key role to play in addressing the limitations of existing extension services and meeting the evolving needs of farmers. Effective technologies will offer valuable solutions to enhance labour and land productivity and provide real-time monitoring of climate risks, enabling proactivity for building resilience<sup>9</sup>. Encouragingly, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship is a major theme for COP28 and is a core area of both the Nairobi Declaration and the AU Climate Strategy.

The Nairobi Declaration specifically calls for access to, and transfer of, environmentally sound technologies, including technologies to support Africa's green industrialisation and transition. It prioritises the partnerships within Africa and with other regions, to meet the needs for technical and technological support, and knowledge sharing for climate change adaptation. It also highlights the need to promote green hydrogen and hydrogen derivatives such as green fertilizer and synthetic fuels. Further, the Nairobi Declaration includes commitments for which technology is a key enabler, including:

- Technology needed to propel Africa's economic growth and job creation in a manner that reduces emissions but also contributes to global decarbonisation efforts.
- Technology that supports economic development plans for climate-positive growth, including climate-aware and restorative agricultural practices and the essential

protection and enhancement of nature and biodiversity.

- Technology to enhance early warning systems and climate information services, enabling proactive measures to protect lives, livelihoods, and assets, and informing long-term decision-making concerning climate change risks.

Axis 3 of the AU Climate Strategy contains a focal area on equitable technology transfer and development with key overarching intervention areas including:

- Support the development of a sustained national and regional technology innovation system;
- Promote regional south-south technology development and transfer/local dissemination; and
- Enhance the participation of African negotiators in technology-related agendas.

In Axis 2 of the AU Climate Strategy, recommendations specific to the food systems transformation agenda are made including:

- Extend use of smart, innovative and climate-resilient technologies, renewable energy production, breed/variety development/switching and technologies that preserve and enhance nutritional qualities in food;
- Increase the adoption of new low-cost, energy saving technologies; and
- Establish systems for developing and transferring technologies to support climate resilience building.


## Conclusion

The collective efforts outlined in the Nairobi Declaration and the AU Climate Strategy highlight Africa's central role in the global climate discourse. Commitments focusing on resilient food systems and the overarching and enabling areas of adaptation, climate finance and technological innovation, with an inclusive approach that supports frontline communities, are critical to addressing Africa's climate-related food system challenges. In preparation for COP28, the prioritisation of food systems, as aligned in the commitments and intervention areas of the AU Climate Strategy and the Nairobi Declaration, presents a critical opportunity for Africa to advance its united climate-resilient development agenda and to strengthen its position in the global climate arena.

<sup>9</sup> Ehui S, Ronchi L, Freeman KK, Loboguerrero AM. 2023. [Scaling agriculture science and innovation for a climate-resilient future in Africa](#). World Bank Blogs.

## Annex 1



Summary of Nairobi Declaration and AU Climate Change Strategy commitments/calls to action and intervention areas to support Africa’s food systems transformation agenda at COP28

Theme	Policy	Relevant commitment/call to action/intervention area
<b>Food systems (general)</b> 	Nairobi Declaration	Redouble our efforts to boost agricultural yields through sustainable agricultural practices, to enhance food security while minimising negative environmental impacts
		Focus our economic development plans on climate-positive growth, including expansion of just energy transitions and renewable energy generation for industrial activity, climate smart and restorative agricultural practices, and essential protection and enhancement of nature and biodiversity
		Support smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples, and local communities in the green economic transition, given their key role in ecosystems stewardship
	AU Climate Change Strategy	Need to intensify efforts to meet international commitments such as those relating to biodiversity and land health (e.g. Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biological Diversity)
		Need for national and regional organisations and governments to address the negative impacts of food systems on the environment and natural resources
		Need for biophysical, social and ecological performance indicators to be monitored to ensure progress towards the continent’s food system targets
		Need for targeted research and innovation which addresses the challenges faced by farmers
		Farmers need to be placed at the centre of transformation agendas
		Develop bankable solutions for ecosystem protection/restoration, sustainable water resources management and regenerative agriculture
		Study and implement a broad range of economic incentives for sustainable businesses that contribute to ecosystem protection/restoration, sustainable water resources management and regenerative agriculture
		Ensure incentives and bankable solutions align with continental, sub-regional, national and local policy directions and socio-political contexts
		Build technical capacity for implementing and investing in regenerative and biodiversity positive agricultural systems across the region
		Develop and support landscape scale multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable agricultural intensification and expansion

Theme	Policy	Relevant commitment/call to action/intervention area
<b>Food systems (general) CONT.</b> 	AU Climate Change Strategy CONT.	<p>Design regional agricultural intensification and expansion plans in line with projected changes in climate change</p> <p>Lobby for and develop intra-African agricultural trade, development and investment partnerships to aggregate performance and risk</p> <p>Restore and sustainably manage agricultural systems (including crop and livestock systems) to reduce and remove GHG emissions, reduce human-wildlife conflict, enhance food security and water regulation benefits</p> <p>Promote agroforestry systems with local and climate-resilient species that provide diversified livelihoods</p> <p>Prioritise novel, integrated livestock management approaches, such as the Herding 4 Health model, which is scalable and traditionally acceptable, enables wildlife-livestock coexistence, climate-change adaptation, carbon sequestration and water regulation</p> <p>Develop policy to allow livestock development strategies that support rural development and contribute to a restoration economy, including the development of national policies and mechanisms to allow for carbon credit trading and benefit sharing for communities that implement rangeland restorative practices</p> <p>Ensure focus on food security, land-use rights and protection of biodiversity in projects for ecosystem-based approaches to carbon removal</p> <p>Integrate full community impact assessments into projects for afforestation, soil enhancement, coastal wetland expansion, and others which are driven by goals of carbon dioxide removal for either credits or payment</p> <p>Develop 'sustainable ecosystem-based approaches' frameworks to ensure that carbon dioxide removal is not done at expense of development needs and local rights</p>
<b>Loss and damage</b> 	Nairobi Declaration  AU Climate Change Strategy	<p>Call for the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund</p> <p>Need for the equitable sharing of climate risk and reward amongst all food system actors, especially smallholder farmers</p> <p>Need to improve farmers access to climate-related insurance products as well as innovative risk-sharing mechanisms</p>
<b>Adaptation action</b> 	Nairobi Declaration	<p>Identify, prioritise, and mainstream adaptation into development policymaking and planning, including in the context of Nationally Determined Contributions</p> <p>Focus our economic development plans on climate-positive growth, including expansion of just energy transitions and renewable energy generation for industrial activity, climate smart and restorative agricultural practices, and essential protection and enhancement of nature and biodiversity</p> <p>Support smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples, and local communities in the green economic transition, given their key role in ecosystems stewardship</p>



Theme	Policy	Relevant commitment/call to action/intervention area
<b>Adaptation action CONT.</b> 	Nairobi Declaration CONT.	Improve access to, and transfer of, environmentally sound technologies
		Enhance drought resilience systems to shift from crisis management to proactive drought preparedness and adaptation, to significantly reduce the drought vulnerability of people, economic activities, and ecosystems
		Promote investments in reskilling to unlock the human capital that will power Africa's inclusive green transition
		Further enhance the inclusive approach through engagement and coordination with children, youth, women, persons living with disabilities, indigenous people, and communities in climate vulnerable situations
		Strengthen early warning systems and climate information services, as well as take early action to protect lives, livelihoods and assets and inform long-term decision-making related to climate change risks. Indigenous knowledge and citizen science needs to be embraced in both adaptation strategies and early warning systems
	AU Climate Change Strategy	Establish a climate-risk insurance facility at a regional level to which every food systems player contributes, directly or indirectly
		Enhance availability of and access to appropriate climate-related insurance products to farmers, as well as novel risk-sharing mechanisms like risk pooling and other innovative models
		Extend use of smart, innovative and climate-resilient technologies, renewable energy production, breed/variety development/switching and technologies that preserve and enhance nutritional qualities in food
		Support research, extension and implementation of public sector and market-based instruments toward agroecological, regenerative, nature-based and indigenous approaches for integrated farming and pastoral systems or resilient landscapes)
		Provide resources to enable/facilitate the transition to more nature positive production systems by farmers
Conduct systematic review of existing policies, strategies and incentive mechanisms that support/inhibit transition to sustainable food systems		
Modify policies, processes and strategies to become more inclusive and participatory and support sub-national scales of food systems governance while linking them with resources and authority to national level		
<b>Adaptation funding</b> 	Nairobi Declaration	Build effective partnerships between Africa and other regions, to meet the needs for financial, technical and technological support, and knowledge sharing for climate change adaptation
	AU Climate Change Strategy	Prioritise predictable and sustainable finance for adaptation at scale
		Ensure that adaptation finance is delivered on a grant basis
		Address the decline in grant finance and the climate-related increasing debt burden of many African countries

Theme	Policy	Relevant commitment/call to action/intervention area
<b>Global Goal on Adaptation</b> 	Nairobi Declaration	Calls for resolve for a measurable Global Goal on Adaptation with indicators and targets to enable assessment of progress against negative impacts of climate change
<b>Finance</b> 	Nairobi Declaration	Honour the commitment to provide USD100 billion in annual climate finance, as promised in 2009 at the UNFCCC 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) in Copenhagen, Denmark
		Develop and implement policies, regulations and incentives aimed at attracting local, regional and global investment in green growth, inclusive of green and circular economies
		Call for concrete, time-bound action on proposals to reform the multilateral financial system
		Build effective partnerships between Africa and other regions, to meet the needs for financial, technical and technological support, and knowledge sharing for climate change adaptation
		Call was made for the adoption of principles of responsible sovereign lending and accountability encompassing credit rating, risk analysis and debt sustainability assessment frameworks and a request for financial markets to commit to eliminate this disparity by 2025
	AU Climate Change Strategy	Coordinate and augment investments by channelling flows toward sustainable food systems from philanthropy, private sector direct investment, and multi-lateral donors
		De-risk investment toward transition by distribution roles across philanthropic, public and private finance by avoiding single source funds; ensure better coverage across short- and long-term investing; maintain balance of risk to investors across spectrum of scales; ensure that ESG and social impact investment reporting by private sector is well monitored and promoted
		Analyse subsidy and investment programmes to ensure that direct payment schemes for food system actors are aimed toward sustainable food systems transformation
		Assess how financial and non-monetary incentives are applied to shift behaviours into more resilient, collaborative and integrated approaches
		Draw from cross-value chain initiative models that recognise and remunerate champions of transformation – highlighting successes (for examples, Beacons of Hope, Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and Rockefeller Food System Vision Prize)
Support development of market-based mechanisms to reward social and environmental outcomes (Ecosystem outcome verification, bundling of ecosystem services with carbon markets for agriculture sector, etc.)		
Explore and establish innovative mechanisms that enhance availability and access to financial resources (both mitigation and adaptation) by farmers, such as soil carbon management carbon dioxide removal		



Theme	Policy	Relevant commitment/call to action/intervention area
<b>Technology and innovation</b> 	Nairobi Declaration	Build effective partnerships between Africa and other regions, to meet the needs for financial, technical and technological support, and knowledge sharing for climate change adaptation
		Promote the production of green hydrogen and hydrogen derivatives such as green fertilizer and synthetic fuels
		Call for improved access to, and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, including technologies to support Africa's green industrialisation and transition
	AU Climate Change Strategy	Support the development of a sustained national and regional technology innovation systems
		Promote regional south-south technology development and transfer/ local dissemination
		Enhance the participation of African negotiators in technology-related agendas
		Extend use of smart, innovative and climate-resilient technologies, renewable energy production, breed/variety development/switching and technologies that preserve and enhance nutritional qualities in food
		Increase the adoption of new low-cost, energy saving technologies
		Establish systems for developing and transferring technologies to support climate resilience building
<b>Inclusion and frontline communities</b> 	Nairobi Declaration	Implement the Abidjan Declaration on achieving gender equality for successful land restoration
		Indigenous knowledge and citizen science needs to be embraced in both adaptation strategies and early warning systems
		Further enhance the inclusive approach through engagement and coordination with children, youth, women, persons living with disabilities, indigenous people, and communities in climate vulnerable situations
		Support smallholder farmers, indigenous peoples, and local communities in the green economic transition, given their key role in ecosystems stewardship
	AU Climate Change Strategy	Promote the equitable sharing of climate risk and reward amongst all food system actors, especially small-scale, rural farmers
		Strengthen community engagement and digital inclusion
		Improve gender and youth participation in policy co-design, co-development processes, co-implementation and M&E
		Empower and engage young people in climate adaptation planning and implementation through inclusive and participatory approaches
		Enhance education and sensitisation on gender and youth responsive approaches
		Increase financial and technical support for youth and gender organisations



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## About this AICCRA POLICY BRIEF

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## About AICCRA

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Accelerating Impacts of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA) is a project that helps deliver a climate-smart African future driven by science and innovation in agriculture. It is led by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT and supported by a grant from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank.

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