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CLIMATE JUSTICE AFRICA Magazine

Edition: July - September

RISING WITH RESILIENCE

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Vision Statement

To be Africa's most trusted voice on climate justice,
amplifying stories, solutions, and leadership.

Mission Statement

Climate Justice Africa exists to spotlight African perspectives, and drive inclusive climate action through credible reports, bold storytelling, and advocacy-driven narratives.

You can expect:

In-Depth Features on climate policies, community solutions,
frontline activism, and the latest science shaping our continent's future.

Voices from the Ground - sharing lived realities and local innovations.

Spotlights on African Climate leaders, change makers,
and unsung heroes transforming climate crisis into opportunity.

Climate and Faith as faith communities across Africa are
rising to the call of climate justice

Culture and Climate as we look at the intersection of art, identity,
heritage, and environmental stewardship.

Climate Pledges from COPs

Resources and Calls to Action that help you stay engaged,
informed, and mobilized.

Whether you are a policy maker, youth leader, researcher,
or simply someone passionate about Africa and the planet,
this magazine is for you.

Climate justice Africa is a movement...

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Editorial Note

Dear Reader,

Welcome to ***Climate Justice Africa Magazine.*** A confident platform dedicated to spotlighting African voices, visions, and victories in the fight for climate justice.

This edition is anchored on the theme **"Rising with Resilience".** It is a reflection of the courage and creativity emerging from our communities as we confront the climate crisis. From the dusty farms of Northern Nigeria to the rising coastlines of Mozambique, Africans are not just enduring; we are innovating, organizing, and reclaiming our future.

At ***Climate Justice Africa Magazine,*** we are amplifying those often unheard, connecting with local and global communities to challenge the single story of vulnerability with powerful stories of strength.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. Read, reflect, share, and most importantly, act.

In solidarity,

Joy Ify Onyekwere

Editor-in-Chief

Climate Justice Africa Magazine

Rep.Sir Sam Onuigbo, FCIS, FNIM, KJW

Nigeria

A trailblazer in environmental legislation, Rep. Sir Sam Onuigbo is widely recognized as the sponsor and "father" of Nigeria's Climate Change Act (2021) — the country's first comprehensive legal framework on climate action. He served two consecutive terms representing Ikwuano/Umuahia North and South in the Nigerian House of Representatives (2015–2023), where he championed sustainable development, security, and climate resilience.

An alumnus of Harvard Kennedy School and a seasoned diplomat with 18 years at the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria, Rep. Onuigbo brings global experience to local action. He currently serves as Vice-President (Africa) of the Global legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment (GlOBE) and Senior Advisor to Climate Parliament.

His leadership has earned him numerous honors, including recognition as one of Business Insider's 30 Global leaders on Climate Action (2023), induction into the National Assembly Most Valuable Parliamentarian (MVP) Hall of Fame, and appointment to the Governing Board of the North East Development Commission. A Knight of John Wesley and holder of multiple traditional titles, he remains a committed advocate for climate justice, good governance, and community empowerment across Nigeria and beyond.

Hope Aluoch Okuthe

Kenya
Project Officer – Energy and Access
Pan African Climate Justice Alliance

Hope Aluoch Okuthe is a Social Development specialist with a strong focus on renewable energy and climate change. Her experience lies in creating inclusive strategies that ensure equitable access to renewable energy resources, especially for marginalized communities, which helps to improve livelihoods and reduce environmental impact. She is committed to fostering sustainable solutions that impact communities.

Her work in climate justice directly addresses the inequities in energy access and the complexities of energy transition. She is dedicated to empowering communities, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, by advocating for inclusive policies and projects that incorporate renewable energy solutions for sustainable development. This involves focusing on social inclusion and ensuring that policy changes favor good governance within the energy sector, establishing environments for favorable markets and affordable finance for upscaling renewable energy. Her efforts aim to bridge the gap between social development frameworks and renewable energy initiatives, creating sustainable solutions that directly benefit communities by enhancing energy access and building climate resilience in vulnerable communities.

ART WORK

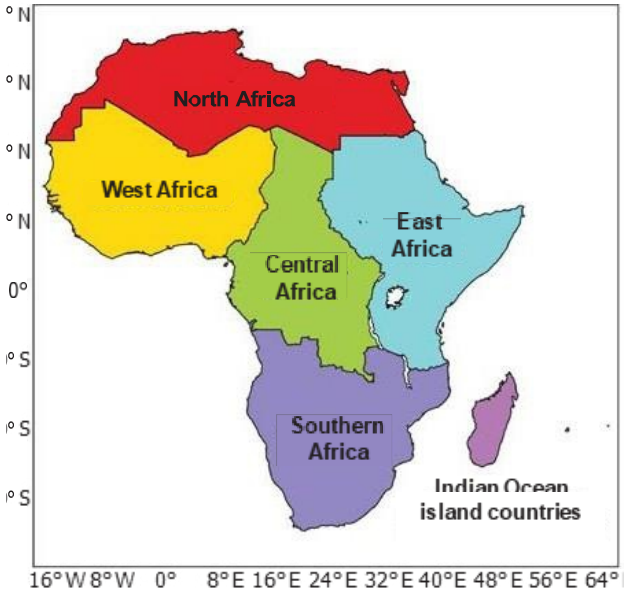
Uyeh Member

Sustainable fashion designer

Each piece of jewelry here transforms plastic bottles and textile waste into wearable art — a bold statement against climate change. By reimagining trash as treasure, we prove that beauty can be sustainable, and fashion can fight for the planet. Wear change. Spark conversation. Make impact with every adornment.

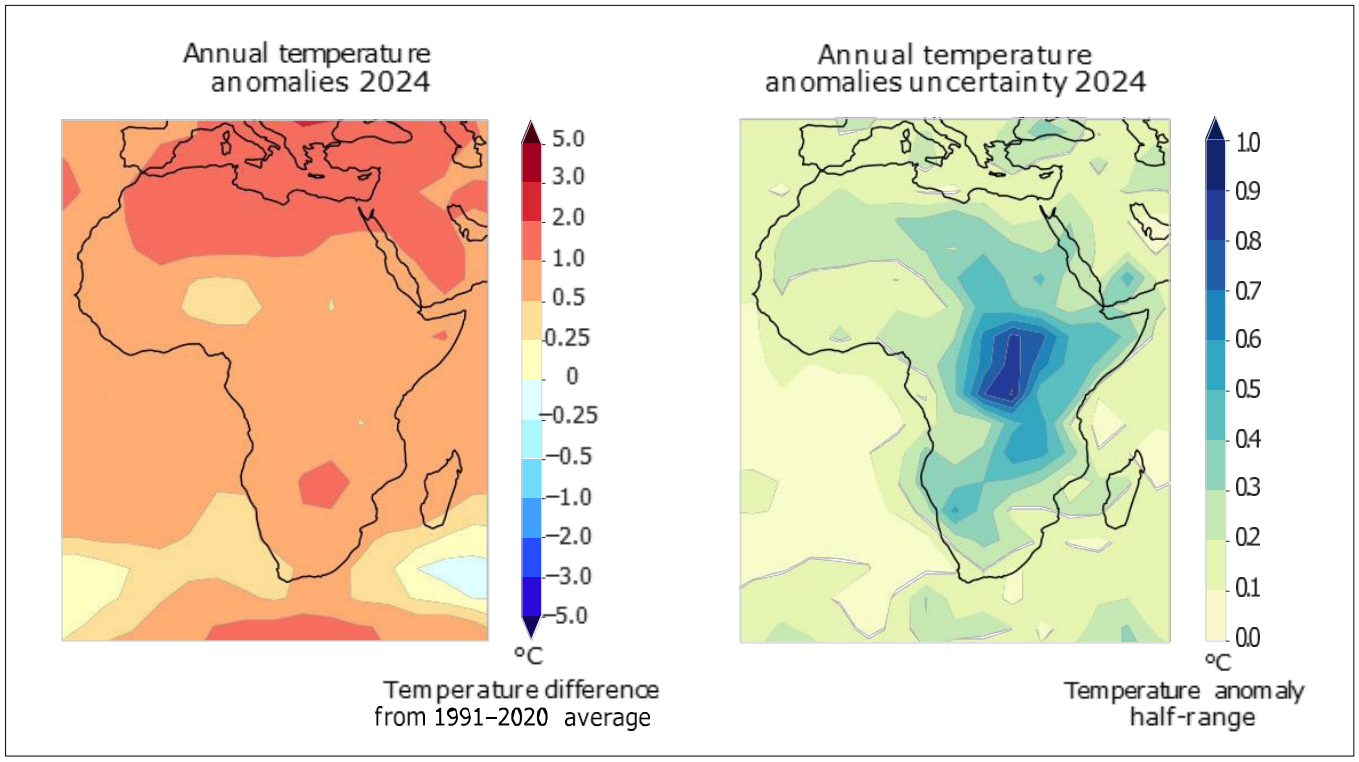
TEMPERATURE IN THE AFRICAN SUBREGIONS

Sourced from the World Meteorological Organization's State of the Climate in Africa 2024 report.



Africa experienced continued warming trends consistent with the global increase in average temperatures. Temperatures across the continent remained above the long-term averages, with significant anomalies recorded in North Africa and northern Southern Africa.

The six African subregions referred to in this report: North Africa (red), West Africa (yellow), Central Africa (green), East Africa (light blue), Southern Africa (dark blue) and the Indian Ocean island countries (purple)



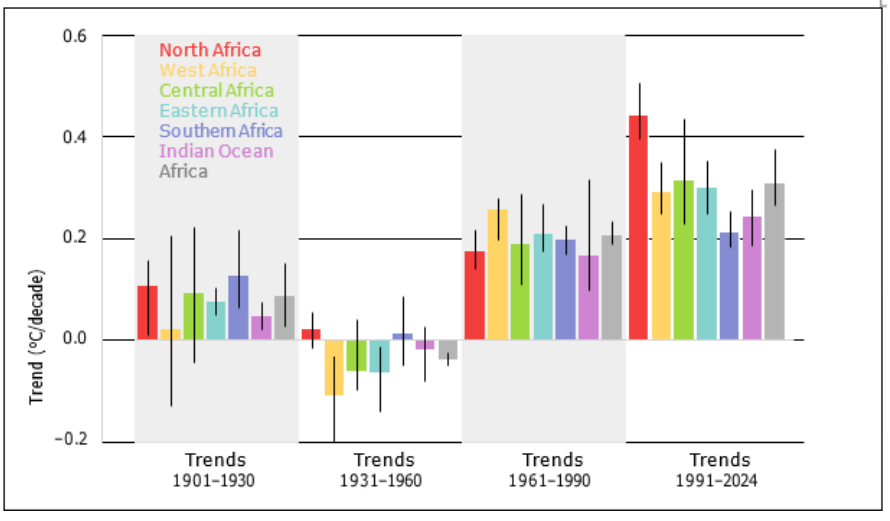
Annual temperature anomalies 2024: Annual near-surface temperature anomaly (in °C, relative to the 1991–2020 average) for 2024. Data shown are the median of the following six datasets: Berkeley Earth, ERA5, GISTEMP, HadCRUT5, JRA-3Q and NOAAGlobalTemp v6. Right:

Annual temperature anomalies uncertainty 2024: Annual near-surface temperature uncertainty (in °C) for 2024. Data shown are the half-range of the following six datasets: Berkeley Earth, ERA5, GISTEMP, HadCRUT5, JRA-3Q and NOAAGlobalTemp v6.

The area-averaged temperature trend for the period 1991–2024 (Table 1 and Figure 5) indicates significant increases for each of the six African subregions. These temperature anomalies have amplified challenges such as water scarcity, food insecurity and ecosystem stress, highlighting the urgent need for adaptive strategies and robust climate action on the continent.

Table 1. Near-surface air temperature anomalies in °C for 2024 relative to the 1991–2020 and 1961–1990 reference periods. Anomalies for the whole African continent and for each of the African subregions have been calculated using six different datasets, including observational datasets (HadCRUT5, NOAAGlobalTemp, GISTEMP and Berkeley Earth) and reanalyses (JRA-3Q and ERA5). The range of anomalies among these datasets is given in brackets.

Subregion	*2024 anomalies relative to 1961–1990*	*2024 anomalies relative to 1991–2020*
North Africa	2.14 °C [1.99 °C–2.26 °C]	1.28 °C [1.04 °C–1.47 °C]
West Africa	1.40 °C [1.28 °C–1.48 °C]	0.72 °C [0.62 °C–0.82 °C]
Central Africa	1.37 °C [1.09 °C–1.54 °C]	0.81 °C [0.49 °C–1.22 °C]
East Africa	1.37 °C [1.01 °C–1.57 °C]	0.68 °C [0.22 °C–0.89 °C]
Southern Africa	1.43 °C [1.27 °C–1.59 °C]	0.84 °C [0.65 °C–1.01 °C]
Indian Ocean island countries	1.21 °C [1.06 °C–1.48 °C]	0.66 °C [0.46 °C–0.79 °C]
Africa	**1.53 °C [1.35 °C–1.63 °C]**	**0.86 °C [0.60 °C–1.05 °C]**



Trends in the area-averaged temperature in °C/decade for the six African subregions: North Africa (red), West Africa (yellow), Central Africa (green), East Africa (light blue), Southern Africa (dark blue), the Indian Ocean island countries (purple) and the whole of Africa (grey) over four sub-periods: 1901–1930, 1931–1960, 1961–1990 and 1991–2024. The trends were calculated using different datasets, including observational datasets (HadCRUT5, NOAAGlobalTemp, GISTEMP and Berkeley Earth) and reanalyses (JRA-3Q and ERA5). The black vertical lines indicate the range of the six estimates.

The South Rises: Africa and the Global Struggle for Climate Resilience

By Rim Ben Khlifa - Tunisia

Once again, we are told the Global South is condemned to death. That Africa is too poor, too weak, too exposed to climatic traumas, and too dependent on Northern favor to move. That it is condemned to permanent drought, dearth of food, and mass displacement. That Latin America is beholden to energy multinationals, or Southeast Asia is selling its forests for GDP.

This exhausting narrative, recounted by voices such as Rampini, Onfray, or Sloterdijk, continues to regard the South as on the margins, a hapless casualty of a crisis born elsewhere. The reality, however, is once again more intricate, mutinous, and hopeful.

Between Crisis and Capacity: The African Paradox

It contributes less than 4% of global emissions, but it suffers from some of the worst impacts: degenerating ecosystems, droughts, desertification, and deluges covering cities. And in the same space, however, some of the most challenging, risky, and socially transformative climate solutions are being thought up and tested.

This is the African paradox: deep vulnerability coupled with enduring resilience. Not by miracle, but by civic creativity, technology-enabled adaptation, and calculated cooperation. In Cairo and Kinshasa, entrepreneurs, indigenous engineers, and local cooperatives are building new futures in the shadow of past crises.

In Kenya, solar-powered cold storage facilities are helping smallholder farmers reduce food loss and guard incomes against increasingly volatile harvests. In Senegal, Jokalante and other startups are using mobile platforms to deliver real-time climate information to off-grid farming communities.

In South Africa and Ghana, fintech programs based on climate are opening up micro-insurance and climate-resilient credit that target the climate-exposed livelihoods. In Rwanda, not only are drones mapping flood areas, but they are being utilized actively to track reforestation activity and ecosystem restoration. These are not token pilot projects designed to win over donors, these are replicable, scalable, and grounded in the real lives of African communities. They are a form of innovation that is locally grown, pressing, and radically utilitarian.

The African Union's Framework for Structural Change

The African Union's 2022–2032 Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy takes a bold step in recognizing innovation as a central pillar of adaptation and resilience. The strategy does not merely call for "technology transfer" from the North, it prioritizes building endogenous innovation ecosystems, regional cooperation, and harmonized policies that support African-led solutions.
Commissioner Lerato Mataboge of the AU's Department of Infrastructure and Energy speaks of this clearly: "Africa's structural transformation cannot depend on extractive growth. It must be driven by climate-compatible innovation and infrastructure that centers people."

Through the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program (AAAP) supported by the AU and the African Development Bank over $25 billion is being mobilized for clean energy, digital climate services, and nature-based solutions, targeting local governments, women entrepreneurs, and green SMEs.

Nowhere is this innovation more palpable than among Africa's youth, a generation that has inherited climate collapse but refuses fatalism. Youth-led climate labs, hackathons, and eco-incubators are flourishing in Nigeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Côte d'Ivoire, and beyond.
Initiatives like the African Youth Adaptation Solutions Challenge (YouthADAPT) empower young entrepreneurs with both funding and mentorship. Others are designing AI-driven early warning systems, circular economy models, and smart irrigation systems for climate-resilient agriculture.

This is what makes Africa unique: innovation is not only technical; it is deeply social, adaptive, and political.

A Third Path Still Possible

Neocolonial logics resurface now disguised in the race for "green" minerals, bioenergy, and land grabs justified by carbon offsets. Many governments remain entangled in development models that prioritize short-term revenue over long-term sustainability.

Yet, the Global South, with Africa at its heart, can still forge a third path not mimicking Europe's technocratic Green Deal, nor succumbing to the deregulated chaos of U.S. climate politics. But rather craving a model of transition that is sovereign, regenerative, and just.
Because the future is not only being negotiated in UN plenary rooms. It is being prototyped in informal settlements, on communal farmlands, inside solar labs, and in the minds of young engineers who refuse to believe that adaptation means surrender.
Africa is not a passive terrain of risk. It is a laboratory of climate survival. And perhaps, of climate leadership.

So that's it, right? Let's just pretend,
ignore the harm we refuse to amend.
Is it ignorance or a lack of sense, to not see the world in such deep suspense?

I'm not here to throw out blame,
But someone must carry the shame.
Litter on the ground, you call that alright?
You pay waste taxes, does that make it polite?

Child of Mother Nature, can't you see?
The changes in climate, the catastrophe
Fires raging, forests fall
Biodiversity, we're losing it all.

Like I said, I don't blame just one, but someone must answer for what's been done.
Extinction rises; we're killing our own
Shouting Save the Climate, yet standing alone.
Ignoring advice, sustainability denied,
We cry when the cyclone takes us for a ride.
Alright, let's talk adaptation's the game,
Since mitigation we've left in shame.

Prevention's better than curing despair, but we can still act if we choose to care.
Plant a tree, recycle waste,
Speak for the Earth with a mindful taste.
Sing for the planet, raise your voice,
Advocate loud, make a conscious choice.

Like I said, I won't blame just you,
But I'll take the guilt, if that's what's due.

Fernando Sozinho/Environmental Ambassador/Mozambique

Africa's Climate Security leadership in a Warming World: From Frontline Vulnerability to Global Climate Negotiation Tables

Gabriel Lagrange

- Director of the Geopolitics of the Environment Department / Institut d'Etudes de Géopolitique Ap- pliquée (IEGA) - France

Among the 25 countries most vulnerable to climate change and fragility, Africa constitutes the largest group, with eight African nations appearing in both categories. As the dual threats of environmental stress and political instability converge, the climate-security nexus has emerged as a critical concern for Africa. The mounting implications of climate-related risks for peace and stability are gaining global attention, notably at the UN Security Council (UNSC). Yet, institutional progress has been slow since 2007, date of its first climate debate. The Russian-Chinese veto of a 2021 resolution attempting to link climate change to international peace and security illustrates how geopolitical divisions continue to obstruct global action.

Outside the UNSC, however, climate security has gained traction in international climate diplomacy. While not part of the formal COP agenda under the UNFCCC, it has made steady progress through presidency-led initiatives since COP26. Egypt's launch of the "Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace" (CRSP) agenda at COP27 marked a turning point, positioning the climate-peace-development nexus as a political priority. This

momentum was institutionalized at COP28 through the first-ever “Relief, Recovery and Peace” thematic day and the Dubai Declaration, endorsed by over 90 countries and emphasizing financial, operational, and collaborative responses to climate-related risks in fragile contexts. At COP29, the Baku Call for Climate Action, Peace, Aid and Recovery introduced the Baku Climate and Peace Action Hub, signaling growing political buy-in.

Despite this growing recognition, climate security remains absent from negotiated COP outcomes. Conflict-related language, present in earlier drafts of both COP28 Global Stocktake and COP29 New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG), was ultimately removed as such sensitive language could derail fragile consensus, especially given the reluctance of states to politicize climate negotiations. This reveals a persistent disconnect: while political momentum for climate security is rising, it has yet to be institutionalized within the formal frameworks of international climate governance.

The Case for African leadership on Climate Security

Africa is uniquely positioned to lead efforts to mainstream climate security at COP. Initially cautious in engaging with global climate diplomacy, due to climate change being marginal on domestic political agendas and perceived as neo-colonial, African states have since recalibrated their approach. As the continent increasingly experiences climate impacts, particularly in conflict-affected areas, climate has climbed the political agenda. Emerging narratives now emphasize agency and opportunity, not just vulnerability, allowing African actors to reclaim space and promote priorities rooted in lived experience.

Climate security dovetails with Africa’s broader advocacy at COP. The continent has contributed the least to global emissions yet faces disproportionate risks, exacerbating insecurity. Neglecting these risks compounds vulnerability and undermines progress on development and adaptation. Prioritizing it, by contrast, reinforces African calls for justice, resilience, and equity. As the Chair of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) stated at COP29, “When Africa loses, the world loses… stability.” African states possess moral legitimacy and lived experience, powerful assets in framing climate security as a global concern.

However, moral authority may not always suffice in an increasingly transactional geopolitical environment. As Nazanine Moshiri, senior analyst at the International Crisis Group, notes, linking Africa’s fragility to broader global risks (e.g., displacement, regional instability, supply chain disruption) can help persuade reluctant donors. Climate security thus becomes not only a development imperative but also a diplomatic tool, one that enhances Africa’s power, shapes global norms, and shifts from policy recipient to norm entrepreneur.

Recognizing its strategic potential, African actors have launched initiatives beyond UNFCCC tracks. Most notable is the Common African Position (CAP) on Climate Security, currently developed by the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council. This effort, informed by a multi-year consultative process and a continental assessment, seeks to unify messaging among African states. It complements other frameworks such as the AU's Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032) and regional initiatives like the Bamako Declaration on Climate, Peace and Security (2022), both of which explicitly reference climate security. African countries also played active roles within COP presidencies' initiatives.

Egypt championed CRSP at COP27; Uganda co-chaired the Baku Call at COP29; and 19 African states signed onto the COP28 Peace Declaration. Several countries participate in the Improved and Equitable Access Network, advocating for tailored finance in conflict-affected areas. These actions demonstrate a growing institutional capacity to champion climate security.

Challenges to Africa's climate security leadership

Yet, Africa's ability to advance this agenda faces persistent obstacles. The most pressing external barrier is the UNFCCC's structure. The framework's mandate, centered on climate mitigation, adaptation, and finance, offers little room for emerging cross-cutting themes like climate security. Agenda-setting requires consensus among all parties, an inherently conservative mechanism that privileges the status quo. Politically sensitive issues, particularly those intersecting with security, are often sidelined to avoid derailing fragile consensus. The removal of conflict-related language from the Global Stocktake and the NCQG exemplifies this constraint. Even as side events and political declarations acknowledge climate-conflict links, official texts remain silent. Many major powers, particularly Brazil, COP30 host, oppose framing climate as a security issue, arguing it lies within the remit of the UNSC, not the UNFCCC. Climate-vulnerable states and even African negotiators worry that introducing conflict could overcomplicate negotiations by politicizing them and trigger jurisdictional tensions with the UNSC.

Power asymmetries further constrain African influence. Developed countries dominate the COP agenda and negotiation architecture, relegating African states to reactive roles. One African negotiator noted, "Access to discussions, documents and decision-making spaces is often difficult for us. We are sometimes the last to know." These inequalities are mirrored in climate finance. While needing $1.3 trillion annually by 2035, only $300 billion in global pledges were granted to developing countries under the NCQG at COP29, mostly in loans, with fragile states struggle to access even a fraction of these funds.

Internal constraints are equally significant. Despite rhetorical commitments, many African policies fail to meaningfully integrate climate-security linkages, a topic still "secondary and even instrumental at times, used when it helps advance other goals" according to Nazanine Moshiri. While Somalia's latest National Determined Contribution (NDC) offers a strong example, most National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and NDCs lack detailed climate security references. This is largely due to institutional silos: peacebuilding, development, and climate actors often operate in isolation, limiting cross-sectoral responses.

Implementation capacity remains limited. While multiple African frameworks mention climate security, few translate into actionable strategies. Political buy-in varies widely across the continent, and internal diversity complicates collective action. Africa includes fragile states, oil exporters, island nations, and middle-income countries, each with different priorities. These differences have delayed agreement on the CAP on climate security and fragmented the AGN. Conflict-free but vulnerable states often resist security framing, fearing it might reduce adaptation funding. Meanwhile, the countries most affected by climate-conflict dynamics are not always the most vocal in global forums. Overall, a true issue remains to define what vulnerability means for the continent and what should be prioritized.

limited negotiating capacity further restricts impact. Many African delegations are under-resourced, sometimes just 6-10 delegates, limiting their ability to follow parallel negotiations, attend side events, or coordinate effectively. Climate security also suffers from a lack of technical expertise and institutional mandates. Negotiators are often drawn from environment ministries, with little input from defense or peacebuilding actors, leaving climate security outside their portfolio. As a result, it remains marginal within the AGN's formal agenda.

What Africa Can Do at COP30?

looking ahead to COP30 in Brazil next November, African negotiators have a timely opportunity to consolidate recent gains. Earlier this year, African ministers adopted a Common Position for COP30, reiterating priorities such as adaptation, finance, clean energy, and a just transition. To embed climate security as a recognized pillar, African states must act strategically on several fronts.

First, they must strengthen internal capacity and collaboration. Capacity-building programs, such as the AGNES sessions on climate security, can help develop

technical expertise on climate-security risks and solutions. Delegations should include representatives from peacebuilding and security sectors, not just environmental ministries. The AU's emerging CAP provides a valuable framework for institutional alignment. As Iamine Sidibe, Guinea's climate negotiator, noted: "African negotiators can only align themselves with the AU guidelines on climate security, especially if this framework results from a continental consensus.". More work should be done in adding climate security in security and climate strategies, (e.g., in NAPs or NDCs)

Second, Africa should strengthen its coalition-building by forging alliances with like-minded states and blocs to elevate climate security from the margins of side events to negotiation rooms. The G77 or IDC Group provide avenues for coordinated vulnerability advocacy. The Improved and Equitable Access Network already models this cross-regional cooperation.

Third, negotiators must mainstream climate security into COP finance negotiations. Fragile states remain among the most underfunded, despite facing the gravest risks. African states should advocate for conflict-sensitive finance mechanisms, vulnerability-weighted criteria, and accessible instruments under the Global Goal on Adaptation and the Baku- to-Belém roadmap. Framing resilience, peace, energy transition and development as mutually reinforcing rather than competing priorities could shift the narrative.
Finally, Africa could push for institutional innovation. Establishing a climate security working group within the UNFCCC would formalize space for this theme and facilitate its gradual integration into official texts.

Despite enduring challenges, climate security is a strategic opportunity for Africa. As Alphonse Muia, Director Environment Science for Partnership for Change, observed, "Many African actors are working under the mindset of 'don't waste a good crisis.'" Climate change is not only a threat but also a catalyst for attention, funding, and reform. COP30 offers a critical juncture: a chance to turn rising political momentum into institutional traction, if African states can align internally and engage globally. As Lamine Sidibe concluded, "I am rather optimistic. Not only should COP30 be perceived with hope, but if we keep moving forward as we are today, within two or three years, climate security could be recognized as its own negotiation subject, with concrete projects and dedicated discussions at COP." The time for Africa to lead is now.

Climate Justice Can't Be Imported: Why the Global South Needs to Lead its Own Climate Future

By Nadine Wahab
EGYPT
Founder, Eco-Dahab,
Director of Sustainable
Network Egypt.

Climate justice is everywhere now—from speeches by world leaders to corporate sustainability strategies. But slogans are not solutions. If the climate movement is serious about justice, it needs to move beyond buzzwords and start listening to the people on the frontlines. Real justice means rethinking how we define priorities, whose voices shape decisions, and what "climate action" looks like on the ground.

The reality is: most climate policy and funding are still driven by the interests, ecosystems, and economies of the Global North. And this continues to leave behind communities that are living with the worst impacts of a crisis they didn't cause.

Global Plans, local Blind Spots

Much of today's climate work is shaped by what happens in big international spaces—especially the annual UN climate summit known as COP. These negotiations set the tone for national strategies, funding streams, and even activist agendas. But they often feel worlds away from the everyday struggles in vulnerable communities.

The climate crisis is local. It's about the flooding in your village, the failed crops, the unbearable summer heat, the water that no longer comes out of the tap. But the solutions discussed in global spaces rarely reflect that reality. Instead, they focus on targets and trends that align with the priorities of richer countries: reducing emissions, scaling green tech, and hitting net-zero goals.

If we want to stop leaving people behind, we need to stop designing climate solutions without them.

Not All Climate Funding Is Created Equal

In theory, climate funding supports three things:

- **Mitigation** – reducing carbon emissions
- **Adaptation** – adjusting to life in a warming world
- **Loss and damage** – helping communities recover from climate-induced disasters

But in practice, most money goes toward mitigation—especially in countries that are historically responsible for the bulk of emissions. That makes sense for their national priorities. But it doesn't help places like Egypt, which contributes less than 1% of global emissions yet faces devastating climate impacts.

Even if Egypt somehow reached net zero tomorrow and perfectly transitioned its workforce to clean jobs, its people would still suffer from water scarcity, food insecurity, heatwaves, and flooding. A "just transition" alone doesn't cool the air or refill the Nile. We need policies that make communities climate-resilient—ones that start with the real threats they're facing, not just international climate goals.

Climate Buzzwords Don't Translate

Terms like "just transition" and "green economy" might sound progressive, but they oRen carry assumptions rooted in temperate climates and industrial economies. In Egypt, for instance, greening the desert by planting trees might look good on paper—but it puts further stress on water systems already stretched to the brink.
What does "green" mean in a country where the natural colors are gold, blue, and brown?

Replicating climate projects designed for Europe or the US in vastly different climates like ours can cause more harm than good. We can't copy-paste climate solutions. They need to grow from the ground up, shaped by people who know their land and their needs.

The Price of Global Visibility

One of the biggest pressures on local environmental groups today is the expectation to show up in global spaces—especially COP. While international engagement is important, it's also expensive, resource-draining, and often exclusionary.

When COP27 came to Egypt, many local civil society groups felt they couldn't afford not to engage. They diverted time and money away from their core work to attend. Some spent a year recovering from the financial and emotional toll. The funding that poured in ahead of COP dried up soon after. And while international actors flew in and out, local communities were left with the same problems—and fewer resources to solve them.

This kind of engagement can't replace long-term, rooted, community-driven work. It shouldn't cost grassroots groups their stability just to be seen.

Short-Term Funding, long-Term Harm

Most support for environmental work comes in short-term, project-based packages. This creates a race for deliverables and reports, while local organizations struggle to retain staff, build expertise, or plan beyond the next grant cycle.

The result? A loss of knowledge, a loss of continuity, and a growing divide between communities on the frontlines and the conversations happening about them at the global level.

local groups often bend their mission to fit external priorities. Instead of shaping the agenda, they're forced to follow it. And when they do get to show up in international spaces, they're often tokenized—celebrated in photos, but sidelined in strategy.

Centering the Right Priorities

If the climate movement truly wants to build a just future, it must begin by listening to the people who live with the consequences of climate change every day. That means supporting:

- **Adaptation and resilience over carbon accounting**
- **Community knowledge over technocratic solutions**
- **Long-term local partnerships over short-term projects**
- **Infrastructure that protects lives over symbolic green initiatives**

Building climate justice requires investing in networks of local organizations, informal groups, and community leaders who understand the land, the politics, and the people. It requires space for experimentation, failure, and learning. It requires trust.

And above all, it requires shifting power.

Toward a Climate Movement That Doesn't Repeat History

For too long, climate action has mirrored the same global dynamics that created the crisis in the first place—extractive, top-down, and focused on the priorities of the powerful. We can't build a just world by repeating old mistakes in new language.

If we truly want to leave no one behind, then we need to start where climate injustice lives—and listen.

Climate Justice and Access to Justice for Rural Populations in Cameroon

Eponine Signe Nana

Climate change, defined as long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns due to the increased concentration of greenhouse gases, impacts every region on Earth. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 stresses the need for urgent action to address climate change and its repercussions. This has led to the emergence of the concept of "climate justice": Climate justice is defined as a concept linking development and human rights to achieve a people-centred approach to climate change, ensuring the rights of the most vulnerable are protected and that the burdens and benefits of climate change are distributed equitably.

In Cameroon, the effects of climate change are profound, manifesting in altered temperatures and rainfall patterns, and increased droughts. According to Country Climate and Development Report: Cameroon, these changes worsen the risks of poverty and famine, particularly for the nearly 40% of vulnerable households. An estimated 2 million people live in drought-affected areas under current climatic conditions, reflecting the country's high vulnerability.

One of the major reasons for this vulnerability is Cameroon's uneven population distribution which contributes to the degradation of arable land and forest landscapes, especially in the northern regions and western highlands. The rural population, largely dependent on agriculture and pastoralism, faces increasing threats to their livelihoods as land productivity declines, potentially contributing to the ongoing heightened rural-urban migration in the country.
Cameroon has committed to addressing climate change through its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and has integrated these commitments into its National Development Strategy (NDS30). One of the strategy's key objectives is to "Strengthen measures to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change (...) to ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth and social development."

Despite these commitments, Cameroon faces significant challenges, particularly in its northern regions, which are critically impacted by climate change. The Far North Region, for example, experiences a 30,000-ton cereal deficit and a food insecurity rate of 33.6%. The presence of over 280,000 refugees and displaced persons further strains natural resources like water and pasture.
In this context, the state directs much of its limited financial resources toward addressing immediate social issues such as health, food security, and post-disaster recovery. However, without significant

improvements in the resilience of the Sudano-Sahelian regions, as well as the West and North-West regions, the state's resources will remain insufficient to meet the climate change challenges. Security concerns also complicate the situation, with regions like the Far North and the North-West/South-West facing instability from Boko Haram and other separatist groups which further erode the resilience of the economy.

Between 2015 and 2020, Cameroon mobilised around USD 162.35 million for climate-related activities under the Paris Agreement, representing 70.84% of the total national and international funding available to the country. However, this amount falls short of what is required to address the country's needs effectively.

Climate Justice in Cameroon

In Cameroon, this means acknowledging that climate change disproportionately affects different territories and social classes, with the poorest, often rural populations, being the most severely impacted.

This raises a question: can Cameroon's legal framework effectively provide rural populations with access to climate justice?

The 1996 revision of Cameroon's Constitution explicitly states in Article 21 that "Everyone has the right to a healthy environment. The protection of the environment is a duty for all, and the State shall ensure the defence and protection of the environment." this amendment reflected the commitment of the Parliament of Cameroon at the time, to environmental issues. Cameroon has implemented several legal measures to address climate change, such as joining the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and developing a National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (NCCAP). The plan serves as a strategy to guide adaptation efforts across the country.

Moreover, the National Observatory on Climate Change (NOCC) was established in 2009 to monitor and assess the socio-economic and environmental impacts of climate change and to propose preventive, mitigative, and adaptive measures. However, challenges remain, including the limited resources available for adaptation and the exacerbation of social and economic inequalities by environmental injustices.

A recent study reveals that 56% of Cameroonians consider the government's response to climate change unsatisfactory, citing persistent deforestation and plastic pollution as major concerns. Furthermore, 48% believe that current adaptation policies are ineffective.

Challenges in Enforcing Climate Justice

In Cameroonian environmental law, the administration responsible for environmental issues has the authority to prosecute environmental violations alongside the Public Prosecutor's Office. However, the effectiveness of this legal framework is limited. For example, the administrative courts lack the power to compel the state to amend its climate regulations, and judges, appointed by the executive branch, may be reluctant to challenge government policies.

Hurdles to accessing climate justice in Cameroon are made greater because environmental law is inherently complex, requiring a deep understanding of the subject matter. This complexity, coupled with a lack of available experts, often impedes the effective enforcement of climate justice. Without changes in the capacity of stakeholders involved in environmental protection, and increased awareness among rural populations about their climate rights, climate justice will continue to be out of reach for those who most need it.

Awareness-raising campaigns, legal education, and the production of educational materials in local languages can help bridge the gap between rural populations and access to climate justice. By empowering these communities with knowledge and resources, they can better navigate the legal system and advocate for their rights.

Access to Justice for Rural Populations

Access to justice for rural populations is crucial, particularly in the face of mining companies' reluctance to comply with environmental regulations. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play an essential role in facilitating access to climate justice. The framework law on environmental management recognises their contribution to environmental protection and public participation in environmental decision-making. However, challenges remain, including the complexity of legal procedures, the lack of expertise within civil society, and the influence of powerful mining companies.

Accessing justice can be prohibitively expensive for impoverished rural populations, with existing poverty being further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. Although Cameroonian law allows for free legal services for indigent persons, this assistance is often limited to legal personnel and does not cover court costs, which can be a significant barrier for those seeking climate justice in rural regions.

Moreover, legal services are concentrated in urban areas, making them difficult to access for those in rural regions. Corruption within the legal system also hinders the pursuit of justice, especially when powerful mining companies can be seen to have significant influence on the administration of climate justice.

Conclusion

The pursuit of climate justice in Cameroon faces many challenges, particularly for rural populations. While the government has made substantial strides in addressing climate change through the introduction of legal frameworks and national strategies, the implementation of these measures remains insufficient. Rural populations, disproportionately affected by climate change, face noteworthy barriers to accessing justice, including financial constraints, complex legal procedures, and limited access to legal services.

To ensure climate justice is achieved, it is imperative to strengthen the capacity of all stakeholders, including civil society, and to raise awareness among rural communities about their rights. Only through collective efforts can Cameroon effectively address the impacts of climate change and ensure that the most vulnerable populations are protected.

Tackling Gender-Based Violence through Gender Equality Responsive Towards Green Climate Solutions in Africa

Written By

Ambassador Ruby Kryticous

Zambia

In Africa, the fight against gender-based violence (GBV) continues to become a more serious issue and the pursuit of climate justice continues to increase deeply with interconnection. While these may appear as separate challenges, their roots inequality, poverty, marginalization, and systemic injustice are shared. As climate change increasingly intensifies the struggles of the most vulnerable, women and girls across the continent are bearing the brunt. For example societies continue to hinder progress around gender based violence as climate change influences the ability towards early marriage becoming a tool to end poverty through dowry. Water scarcity due to high temperatures is a contributing factor, as women and girls are no longer safe to walk long distances in search of water, sanitation or hygiene without fear of being attacked. However, by crafting climate solutions that are gender sensitive into a more responsive approach, African countries have a unique opportunity to confront GBV while building more resilient and inclusive societies.

The Intersections: GBV and Climate Change

Gender-based violence in Africa is a long-standing and pervasive issue. From domestic abuse and child marriage to sexual violence and exploitation, GBV thrives where inequality and disempowerment persist. Climate change exacerbates these vulnerabilities making it difficult to survive external shocks.

When droughts, floods, and resource scarcities strike, women and girls are often left behind in their education, social programs to positively contribute to development. Gender roles often forces women and girls into vulnerable situations that increases the risk of sexual violence. In displacement camps caused by climate disasters, the lack of privacy, basic services, adequate health and security often leads to further abuse. Economic hardships resulting from climate shocks also increase migration, early marriages and trafficking as coping mechanisms in impoverished households.

Climate change doesn't affect everyone equally. "Climate change could force 216 million people to migrate within their own countries by 2050". The majority who are women, children and persons with disabilities, are left out of climate adaptation plans, not only do their specific vulnerabilities go unaddressed, but their invaluable knowledge and potential contributions to sustainable solutions are lost. Thus creating a gap between stakeholders to reach measurable outcomes towards delivering a positive impact.

Current Progress Across Africa

Encouragingly, several African countries and communities are beginning to recognize the link between climate resilience and gender equality. Policy reforms, grassroots movements, and international frameworks are helping to integrate gender into climate responses.

In Kenya, the Climate Change Act includes a requirement for public participation, ensuring that women, youth, and marginalized groups are included in decision-making processes. Zambia has adopted a National Climate Change Policy that highlights the need for gender equity, and women-led cooperatives are being trained in sustainable agriculture practices to support community resilience for support towards food security. Around the world, over 230 million girls and women undergo traditional practices such as FGM. Africa accounts for the largest share of this total, with over 144 million. Asia follows with over 80 million, and a further 6 million are in the Middle East. Another 1-2 million are affected in small practicing communities and destination countries for migration in the rest of the world. Recent Milestones

- **Mali (2023): Finally passed a national law criminalizing FGM after years of advocacy.**

- **Sierra Leone (2024): Officially criminalized FGM, a major breakthrough after decades of civil society pressure.**

- **Sudan (2020): Amended its criminal code to outlaw FGM, with prison penalties.**
  Kenya
- **law: Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2011**

Key Features:

- **Criminalizes FGM for all women and girls.**

- **Punishable by up to 7 years in prison, or life imprisonment if death occurs.**

- **Also criminalizes aiding, abetting, or failure to report FGM.**

- **Includes extraterritorial provisions (e.g., taking someone abroad for FGM).**

Civil society organizations across the continent have also taken up the mantle. Groups such as WEP (Women Environmental Programme) in Nigeria and Akina Mama wa Afrika in Uganda are empowering women through climate-smart farming, advocacy training, and awareness campaigns that connect GBV prevention to environmental sustainability. Including Green Agriculture Youth Organisation in Zambia are providing women with tools in order to address the vulnerabilities which climate change poses.

At the regional level, the African Union Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2020–2030) places climate resilience and GBV prevention as priority areas. Additionally, African negotiators within the UNFCCC have been instrumental in pushing for gender-responsive climate finance and the inclusion of women in climate decision-making spaces.

Solutions That Work: Integrating Gender into Climate Action

To tackle GBV through gender-responsive climate solutions, action must be deliberate and rooted in intersectionality. Here are several approaches that are proving effective across Africa:

1. Empowering Women in leadership and Decision-Making

When women are included in climate policy and disaster planning, they bring different perspectives and priorities that benefit whole communities. Local adaptation committees, climate finance boards, and national environmental agencies must not only include women but also empower them to lead. This representation ensures GBV risks are addressed in planning and that women's safety is a consideration in all climate interventions.

2. Investing in Gender-Responsive Climate Finance

Most climate funds still flow through male-dominated sectors and lack targeted investments in GBV prevention or women's resilience. Donors and governments should direct funding toward women-led organizations and projects that address the dual challenge of gender inequality and climate change. Small-scale grants to local women's cooperatives can support sustainable energy, water access, and income generation—key factors in reducing GBV risk.

3. Strengthening Climate-Resilient Services

Access to safe water, clean energy, and climate-resilient housing reduces women's exposure to violence. For example, distributing clean energy cookstoves and solar lighting in rural communities not only protects the environment but also minimizes the need for women to travel long distances in dangerous conditions. Investing in healthcare services, especially sexual and reproductive health clinics, can also provide safe spaces and early intervention points for survivors of GBV.

4. Education and Awareness Campaigns

Grassroots education campaigns help communities understand the links between climate risks and GBV. By promoting environmental stewardship alongside gender equality, these programs are reshaping harmful social norms. Educating boys and men about the value of women in climate action and community development fosters long-term behavioral change.

5. Inclusive Data Collection and Research

Evidence-based policy is critical. Governments and NGOs must invest in collecting disaggregated data that captures the gender-specific impacts of climate change and violence. With better data, policymakers can design interventions that are targeted, efficient, and transformative.

Future Actions: What Needs to Happen Now

Despite progress, the work is far from over. GBV remains one of the most underreported and under-resourced crises in Africa. As climate events grow more severe, the urgency to act grows greater. Here's what must come next:

- Mainstream Gender in National Climate Plans: All African countries developing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) must integrate gender-responsive approaches, ensuring women's rights and safety are central to climate planning and financing.

- Scale up Support for Women's Climate leadership: Governments, donors, and international organizations must invest in long-term leadership programs for women and girls. These should include mentorship, education, and access to platforms at local, national, and global levels.

- Strengthen legal Frameworks: legal protections against GBV must be strengthened and enforced. Simultaneously, laws related to land tenure, inheritance, and access to natural resources should be reformed to favor gender equity, empowering women to become stewards of climate solutions.

- Create Safe, Green livelihoods for Women: Building economic resilience through green jobs, agroecology, eco-tourism, and sustainable industries can reduce women's financial dependence and exposure to violence. Climate-smart livelihood programs must be tailored to the needs of women and girls.

- Build Cross-Sector Alliances: Tackling GBV through climate solutions requires collaboration between the environment, justice, health, education, and gender sectors. Cross-sectoral strategies foster innovation and ensure no aspect of the issue is left behind.

Conclusion: Climate Justice Must Be Gender Justice

The African continent stands at a pivotal moment. The climate crisis, while devastating, also offers an opportunity to reimagine a more just and inclusive future. By embedding gender equality at the heart of climate solutions, we can do more than protect the environment—we protect lives, uphold human dignity, and dismantle systems of violence that have endured for far too long.

Tackling gender-based violence in Africa cannot be separated from climate justice. They are bound together by the imperative to transform our societies from the ground up. Women deserve equal rights, opportunity and freedom to choose a better future for the next generation today. Our commitment is to provide communities with transformative leadership skills that are consistent toward gender equality. African women and girls must not just be participants—they must be leaders because their voices matter.

Proposal for the Establishment of the African Ocean literacy Civil Society Action Network:

A Key Necessity for Uplifting Voices of local Actors, Creating Public Awareness and Increasing Ocean Education and literacy in Africa.

Anthony Akpan

This proposal seeks to address Challenge 10 of the Ocean Decade " Ensure that the multiple values and services of the ocean for human wellbeing, culture, and sustainable development are widely understood, and identify and overcome barriers to behavior change required for a step change in humanity's relationship with the ocean" And Objective 3 "Increase the use of ocean knowledge and understanding, and develop capacity to contribute to sustainable development solutions" Including Sub-Objectives 3.1 "Broadly communicate and promote the role of ocean science for sustainable development across diverse stakeholder groups including through formal and information education and an expansion of ocean literacy approaches across stakeholders groups"

In Africa, most of us live our lives unaware of how our day-to-day actions affect the health and sustainability of the ocean and its many resources on which we depend. Nor do the majority of us recognize how the health of the ocean affects our daily lives. Most citizens are not aware of the full extent of the medical, economic, social, political, and environmental importance of the ocean and seas. However, what some scholars have called "ocean blindness" can be countered by improving access to accurate and compelling ocean education that strengthens the learner's connection with the ocean. This is the essence of ocean literacy: an understanding of the ocean's influence on us and our influence on the ocean.

Africa is a young continent with more than 60% of the population aged below 30 years. The continent should harness the demographic dividend by empowering

this huge pool of human resource potential. The focus should be on getting them into ocean sciences through focused ocean literacy programmes, supporting skills development and mentoring to enable them fit in the job market and creating new opportunities for employment. This will facilitate the unlocking of scientific excellence and the creation of the new generation of ocean experts.

There is great need to further facilitate the engagement and participation of Civil Society Organizations in the challenges of Ocean issues in Africa by promoting constructive broad based, open dialogue, discussions, and sharing of views on all issues, between all role - players, stakeholders and affected parties including civil society, academia, NGOs, the private sector, communities, women groups, youths including students and governments. Gaining the long-term support and acceptance of Civil Society Organizations through an efficient outreach is vital.

Therefore, complementing the other parts of the initiative, it is imperative to have a comprehensive stakeholder outreach program to re-build relations between the various stakeholders, thereby furthering the sustainability of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) planned achievements. This effort will focus on building consensus and influencing actions of relevant departments and institutions who are willing to facilitate, plan and lead on the implementation of United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) in Africa through knowledge sharing, capacity building and networking in a spirit of partnership based on values of and a respect for gender equity, diversity and participatory decision-making.

"CLIMATE CHANGE ACT 2021 AND ITS NEXUS WITH EDUCATION IN NIGERIA"

PAPER PRESENTED BY REP. SIR SAM ONUIGBO FCIS, FNIM, KJW, MEMBER (SOUTH EAST), ON THE GOVERNING BOARD AND CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON SECURITY, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND SPECIAL INTERVENTIONS, NORTH EAST DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION, DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE CONFERENCE OF DEANS OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES (CODENU) 2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE, HELD AT MICHAEL OKPARA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, UMUDIKE, ON APRIL 7, 2025.

INTRODUCTION

The history of global efforts to address climate change can be traced back to the early 1970s, when environmental concerns first gained serious international attention. A significant turning point occurred in 1972 with the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden. This was the UN's first major scientific conference on environmental issues, resulting in a groundbreaking declaration that formally recognized climate change and other ecological challenges as matters of global concern. The Stockholm Conference also led to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), laying the foundation for a coordinated international environmental governance structure. As Peter Jackson notes in his seminal work From Stockholm to Kyoto: A Brief History of Climate Change, "in the midst of the current international debate on global warming, it is instructive to note that it has taken the United Nations and the international community some two generations to reach this point" (Jackson, 2007).

Another two decades passed before a comprehensive and impactful global framework was developed. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), often referred to as the Rio Earth Summit, launched key instruments such as the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. This conference also saw the creation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). These conventions became the leading platform for coordinating international climate action and are fundamental to today's discussion. These three legally binding international agreements are fondly called the "The Rio Triplets."

Since Rio, the global climate governance regime has evolved significantly. The Kyoto Protocol, adopted in 1997, was the first legally binding treaty under the UNFCCC that committed developed countries to emission reduction targets. This was followed by the Paris Agreement in 2015, which came into force in 2016 and is now regarded as the most comprehensive and inclusive climate accord. The Paris Agreement signifies a renewed global commitment to limiting global warming and enhancing climate resilience through nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and mechanisms for climate finance.

From Stockholm to Paris, this historical progression highlights the incremental yet determined global response to climate change. It also sets the tone for our present-day discussions, emphasizing that while progress has been made, continued collaboration with the education sector and scientific research and innovation remain imperative to strengthening our collective climate action. Unlike Peter Jackson's description "Stockholm – Kyoto" the Nigerian Climate Change Act is part of a long standing advocacy on climate change that began in Stockholm, then moved to Rio, followed by Kyoto and Paris, before eventually enacted as law in Abuja.

In this context, Nelson Mandela's words ring ever true: "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world." As Nigeria grapples with the multifaceted challenges of climate change– including erratic weather patterns, desertification, flooding, and food insecurity–education emerges as a transformative force. It is through education that future generations can be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to confront and mitigate the environmental crises threatening the nation's socio-economic stability.

The Climate Change Act 2021 marks not only a legislative milestone but also a critical opportunity to integrate climate consciousness into Nigeria's educational systems. By embedding environmental sustainability into curricula and public awareness initiatives, Nigeria can foster a more informed and proactive citizenry–one capable of driving lasting solutions for a more resilient and sustainable future.

The Act establishes institutional frameworks, enhances capacity-building, and promotes multi-sectoral collaboration, thereby presenting an unprecedented opportunity to integrate climate change education as a central pillar within Nigeria's educational landscape. This initiative spans from basic education to tertiary institutions, as well as from vocational training centres to teacher development programmes, creating a legal and policy foundation to cultivate a generation of climate-literate Nigerians. As Ban Ki-moon aptly articulated, "Climate change does not respect borders; it does not respect who you are – rich and poor, small and big. Therefore, this is what we call global challenges, which require global solidarity." Climate change has been characterised as large-scale alterations to global weather patterns and average temperatures over extended periods, with a consensus that the climate change induced by rising global temperatures primarily results from human activities that exacerbate the natural greenhouse effect (IPCC, 2014).

Incorporating climate education into every stratum of learning not only fosters awareness but also inspires behavioural change, innovation, and resilience. The urgency is clear: Nigeria is among the most climate- vulnerable nations in the world, yet many students and educators lack the basic knowledge and tools needed to understand or respond to these growing threats (Edugist, 2023). “The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it,” warned environmentalist Robert Swan. It is through deliberate educational reform that Nigeria can empower every citizen—from the classroom to the boardroom—to become part of the solution.

The Climate Change Act mandates the National Council on Climate Change to coordinate climate action across ministries, including education. This means curriculum planners, education policymakers, and school administrators now have a legal obligation and a moral one to integrate climate change into school syllabi, teacher training, research priorities, and institutional strategies. It is a clarion call to rethink education as a vehicle for climate justice, environmental stewardship, and sustainable national development (lawyard, 2022).

Rising temperatures have contributed to ocean acidification, glacier shrinking, rising global sea levels, and changing precipitation patterns (IPCC, 2014; McCoy & Watts, 2014). Extreme weather events such as droughts, floods and heat waves are more common, severe, and longer lasting as a result of climate change, having considerable socio-economic impacts the world over (Crimmins et al., 2016; Franchini & Mannucci, 2015; WMO, 2017). In this presentation, we explore the significance of Nigeria’s Climate Change Act for education. We examine how this legal framework can catalyze climate-responsive teaching and learning, strengthen human capital, and shape a climate-literate populace ready to drive sustainable transformation. In doing so, we underscore the urgent need for stakeholders to champion climate change education as both a national necessity and a generational responsibility. Heavy rainfall and release of dam waters in 2022 led to the worst flooding in more than 80 years, killing over 600 people and displacing an additional 1.3 million persons according to reports from UNICEF.

SECTION 1: OBJECTIVES AND APPLICATIONS OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE ACT

Section 1 of the Nigeria Climate Change Act 2021 states "This Act provides a framework for achieving low greenhouse gas emission (GHG), inclusive green growth and sustainable economic development by… mainstreaming climate change action in line with national development priorities." It stresses the importance of mainstreaming climate change into national policies and development priorities, ensuring that education plays a critical role in achieving these long-term goals.

Education is further recognised as an essential tool for promoting climate awareness and driving behavioural change. By incorporating climate change topics into curricula and research, the Act empowers educational institutions to contribute to the development of sustainable practices. Educational stakeholders, particularly those in higher education, are tasked with "ensuring that students, communities, and the general populace are well-informed about climate change" (World Bank, 2021), which strengthens the Act's overarching goals.

The Act's focus on collaboration across sectors further underscores the role of education in climate action. This call for partnership ensures that education is an active participant in achieving the nation's climate goals. By engaging with the National Council, the education sector helps to bridge the knowledge gap, fostering a climate- resilient society capable of addressing both local and global climate challenges (UNESCO, 2020).

SECTIONS 3, 4 AND 5: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL, ITS FUNCTIONS AND POWERS AND MEMBERSHIP

Section 3 of the Climate Change Act, establishes the National Council on Climate Change, whih shall be vested with powers to make policies and decisions on all matters concerning climate change in Nigeria". According to Section 3 of the Act, the National Council is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the implementation of climate change policies, ensuring that climate change considerations are integrated into all sectors of national development (Nigerian Government, 2021). One of the key areas of focus within this integration is education, where climate change must be embedded into the educational framework to enhance climate awareness and action. Education professionals, especially those in leadership positions, are crucial in ensuring that climate change is addressed through curriculum development and climate literacy initiatives.

In Section 4, the Act further empowers the National Council by granting it the authority to formulate policies, approve climate action plans, and ensure the mainstreaming of climate change across all sectors, including education (Nigerian Government, 2021). This mainstreaming process is essential to building a climate-resilient society, where

the education sector plays a key role in creating awareness and facilitating climate action. By engaging educational stakeholders, particularly universities and schools, the National Council can ensure that educational frameworks are designed to address the impacts of climate change, provide knowledge on adaptation and mitigation strategies, and foster sustainable practices.

The Act also gives the Council the power to disseminate information on climate change, including raising awareness about the risks, vulnerabilities, and adaptation strategies (Nigerian Government, 2021). Educational institutions, therefore, become crucial platforms for this dissemination of knowledge. As schools and universities collaborate with the National Council, they can help translate complex climate change issues into accessible information for local communities, particularly those most affected by climate impacts. Integrating climate change into educational systems is thus an essential step towards equipping the population with the necessary tools to mitigate and adapt to the challenges posed by climate change.

Through such partnerships, the education sector can significantly contribute to the fight against climate change, ensuring that the next generation is equipped to lead in climate resilience (UNESCO, 2020; World Bank, 2021).

In Section 5, the Acts emphasizes "The Council shall consist–

(a) The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, who shall Head the Council as Chairman

(b) The Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, who shall be the Vice Chairman".

This Section clearly outlines the Council's membership, designating the President as its leader to help prevent "peer jealousy" among members, thereby safeguarding the Council's vital responsibilities from being undermined.

SECTION 22: OBLIGATIONS OF MDAS

Section 22 of the Act is crucial for integrating climate change considerations into various sectors, including education. The Act mandates Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to "establish a climate change desk to be supervised by an officer not below the Directorate cadre, who shall be responsible for ensuring integration of climate change activities into their core mandate."

The establishment of the climate change unit also creates opportunities for professionals with expertise in climate change to become part of every MDA. Through this provision, all educational institutions are required to align their programmes and budgets to

reflect climate change concerns, thereby fostering a climate-conscious mindset in the educational sector. This is particularly significant for education because it serves as a key platform for disseminating knowledge on climate change- equipping future generations with the tools to address environmental challenges (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2021).

The relationship between the Climate Change Act and education is evident in the Act's emphasis on carbon emission reduction targets, which are tied to the broader goals of national development, including sustainable development through educational policies. Schools and universities are expected to adopt climate change education, enabling students to understand the impact of environmental degradation and

develop innovative solutions. This integration encourages the inclusion of climate change topics in curricula, fostering sustainability education. Educational reforms driven by the Act have the potential to build a generation that is both knowledgeable and motivated to tackle climate-related issues (Oyekale, 2021; Nwachukwu et al., 2020).

The Act encourages academic institutions to actively contribute to achieving national climate goals by implementing climate change-oriented programs. The educational sector is uniquely positioned to influence public perception and behavior concerning climate change, making it essential for schools to integrate sustainability and climate education into their programs. Institutions that fail to align with these mandates could face penalties, thus ensuring that educational systems contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's climate goals. Therefore, the Climate Change Act addresses environmental challenges and influences educational reforms that shape a climate-resilient society (Uche, 2021; Oloyede, 2022; Ajibade and Olorunfemi, 2021).

SECTION 26: CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION

"The Secretariat shall, with the approval of the Council, advise the MDAs responsible for regulating the educational curriculum in Nigeria on integrating climate change into the various disciplines and subjects across all educational levels."

Section 26 of the Act is a key provision that underlines the role of education in addressing climate change, emphasizing the integration of climate change education across all levels of the national education system. It specifically mandates the establishment of educational curricula that incorporate climate change topics within various disciplines. This initiative is crucial in shaping an informed citizenry capable of understanding and addressing climate-related issues, particularly in a nation like Nigeria that is highly vulnerable to climate impacts such as flooding, desertification, agricultural disruption, climate refugees, etc.

The Act further stipulates in section 26 (2),

"The Secretariat, with the approval of the Council may-

(a) Partner with MDAs referred to under subsection (1), or

(b) Support scientific research and other similar projects, relevant to the formulation and development of educational curricula and programmes geared towards adaptation and risk mitigation."

The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) is responsible for developing, reviewing and enriching curricula across all levels of education, as well as promoting book development and quality assurance. They also conduct education research to inform policy and implementation. The functions of this agency align perfectly with the stipulations of Section 26(2)(b) of the Climate Change Act. This interconnectedness must be highlighted as the key responsibilities of NERDC including curriculum development at all levels of education, book development and quality assurance, educational research, policy implementation, teacher education, etc.

Section 26 tasks the National Council on Climate Change with guiding educational authorities in integrating climate change into school curricula. This provision not only seeks to raise awareness about climate change but also aims to foster a culture of sustainability from a young age. By embedding climate change education into various academic disciplines, the Act ensures that students are not merely passive recipients of information but active participants in shaping Nigeria's climate future. The need for a more resilient society is urgent, and Section 26 presents a practical step in preparing future generations to meet climate challenges.

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The Act recognizes the significance of education in achieving sustainable development and climate resilience. This is particularly important for Nigeria, where climate change is predicted to affect sectors such as agriculture, health, and urban planning. By integrating climate change education into the national curriculum, Section 26 contributes to the national strategy for climate action by ensuring that every citizen, irrespective of their field of study, is equipped with knowledge about the environment and sustainability. This approach encourages interdisciplinary learning, which is essential for understanding the multifaceted nature of climate change and its impacts.

This same section further reinforces the pivotal role that education plays in Nigeria's climate action strategy. It highlights the necessity for an informed and educated population that can actively contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation

efforts. By integrating climate change into the education system, Nigeria can develop a generation of young people who are not only aware of the issues but also equipped with the skills to contribute to long-term environmental sustainability. Such a strategy is integral to the country's overall development, especially in facing the inevitable challenges posed by climate change.

SECTION 18 OF THE 1999 CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA (as amended)

Section 18 subsection 1 of the Nigerian Constitution states, "Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels." This provision enshrines the commitment of the Nigerian state to ensuring that education is accessible to all, thereby promoting inclusivity throughout the nation. The Climate Change Act of 2021 builds upon this constitutional foundation by explicitly integrating climate change education into the aims to ensure national curriculum. The clause in Section 26 of this Act underlines the Act's intention to make climate change an integral component of educational content at all stages, from primary to tertiary education, thus aligning with the constitutional objective of equal educational opportunities (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1999; Federal Ministry of Environment, 2021).

The Climate Change Act places a strong emphasis on the need for climate change education as a tool for public awareness and informed action. This provision further echoes the spirit of Section 18 of the Constitution by reinforcing the government's role in making climate change education widely accessible, thus ensuring that all citizens, particularly the youth, are equipped with the knowledge needed to confront climate challenges. The Act's stipulation on the inclusion of climate change in educational curricula ensures that the content is not only relevant but also comprehensive, making the issue of climate change a nationwide educational priority (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2021).

Section 20 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) provides a foundational commitment to environmental protection, stating: "The State shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard the water, air, land, forest, and other natural resources of Nigeria." This constitutional provision highlights the state's responsibility to manage and safeguard Nigeria's environmental resources, a duty that aligns closely with the objectives of the Climate Change Act 2021. Both the Constitution and the Climate Change Act emphasize the importance of sustainable environmental practices in response to the growing threats of climate change, degradation, and the depletion of natural resources. The state's role in promoting environmental conservation is crucial for achieving long-term climate resilience, and both legal instruments underscore the necessity of systemic approaches to environmental protection.

Section 20 of the Nigeria Climate Change Act 2021 further amplifies the nation's environmental goals by mandating the government to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies into national policies, plans, and programs. The Act mandates a cross-sectoral approach to achieving sustainable development while addressing the risks posed by climate change, particularly to vulnerable populations. This section serves as a policy framework for aligning environmental protections with climate change mitigation efforts, ensuring that actions taken at both the federal and subnational levels actively contribute to national climate goals. In essence, the Climate Change Act 2021 operationalizes the broad environmental mandate set out in Section 20 of the Nigerian Constitution, providing a strategic pathway for safeguarding the country's natural resources and reducing its vulnerability to climate impacts.

One of the key goals of Section 20 of the Constitution is to protect natural resources such as land, water, and forests, which are fundamental to human well-being and economic prosperity. The Climate Change Act 2021 complements this goal by emphasizing the need to incorporate environmental sustainability into the country's industrial and economic activities. It calls for the sustainable management of these resources through coordinated efforts among government agencies, civil society organizations, and private sector actors. For example, the Act encourages the development of carbon markets, renewable energy sources, and sustainable land- use practices to reduce carbon emissions, which directly supports the constitutional obligation to protect the environment.

Nature-Based Solution

This objective is amplified by Section 27 of the Act which emphasizes that "The Council shall promote and adopt nature-based solutions to reducing GHG emissions and mitigating climate change issues in Nigeria"

Further alignment can be seen in the Act's focus on public awareness, capacity building, and education regarding climate change, ensuring that all Nigerians are equipped to contribute to environmental conservation. By fostering awareness of climate issues and the need for sustainable practices, the Act seeks to empower citizens, businesses, and local governments to engage in practices that protect the environment. This is consistent with the constitutional provision, which not only mandates environmental protection but also encourages public participation in safeguarding the nation's natural resources.

Additionally, Section 20 of the Constitution emphasizes the importance of safeguarding air and water quality, two critical elements threatened by climate change. The Act includes provisions for regulating greenhouse gas emissions, reducing air pollution, and managing water resources sustainably. Both legal documents highlight the urgent need for Nigeria to transition to a low-carbon economy and ensure that its development does not compromise the health of its natural ecosystems. The Act specifically focuses on integrating climate change into national development priorities, ensuring that environmental considerations are central to the nation's growth trajectory.

Sections 18 and 20 of the Nigerian Constitution and Section 26 of the Act provide a comprehensive legal framework for environmental stewardship in Nigeria. The three provisions emphasize the state's responsibility to protect and improve the environment, addressing critical issues such as climate change, pollution, and resource depletion. By ensuring that national policies and practices align with these legal provisions, Nigeria can take proactive steps toward creating a sustainable and climate-resilient future. The Constitution's broad environmental goals, as set out in sections 18 and 20, are complemented and operationalized by the detailed, actionable strategies outlined in the Act, allowing Nigeria to face the challenges of climate change with effective governance and public participation.

Nigeria's ambition to attain net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2060 (actually 2050-2070 Section 1(f) of the Act) necessitates a comprehensive transformation across all facets of society and the economy. Tackling this complex challenge calls for the development of new competencies and an educational paradigm that prepares present and future generations to effectively respond to the uncertainties of climate change. Individuals must be ready to take deliberate actions within their personal lives, careers, and civic responsibilities to reduce emissions and build resilience to climate impacts.

Studies show that when students understand the causes and effects of climate change, they are more likely to adopt sustainable practices and influence others around them (leal Filho et al., 2024).

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are uniquely positioned to drive this transformative agenda by engaging both academic staff and students in climate action. Their role encompasses fostering an in-depth understanding of climate issues, promoting the development and implementation of sustainable solutions, and ensuring the widespread dissemination of climate-related knowledge. Climate Change Education (CCE), though interpreted in various ways, broadly aims to equip learners across all fields with the awareness, skills, and critical thinking necessary to address the risks, uncertainties, and rapid socio- environmental changes associated with a warming planet. CCE also focuses on nurturing future leaders and innovators capable of steering society toward climate-resilient pathways. This entails understanding how climate change is already shaping industries, communities, and global systems– and will continue to do so–and recognizing the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in developing effective, evidence-based responses across the entire

higher education landscape (Noel B. Saliu: 2023 The Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards: The Role of NUC in Mainstreaming Climate Change Mitigation and Justice in University Education in Nigeria)

THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The National Universities Commission (NUC) plays a pivotal role in shaping academic standards within Nigeria's university system. By Section 10 (1) of the Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Act, Cap E3, laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, the NUC is mandated to establish and enforce minimum academic standards for universities and other degree-awarding institutions nationwide. This includes overseeing the accreditation of programmes and educational qualifications to ensure quality and relevance in higher education. Through this function, the NUC holds a strategic position in integrating Climate Change Education into university curricula, thereby aligning academic programmes with national and global sustainability goals (Noel B. Saliu: 2023 The Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards: The Role of NUC in Mainstreaming Climate Change Mitigation and Justice in University Education in Nigeria). Clearly, climate change education requires collective and collaborative efforts across all academic disciplines to ensure that actions to address the complex, dynamic, and multifaceted challenges confronting us are informed by profound technical competencies across our Higher Education Sub-Sector.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) play a crucial role in facilitating readiness for positive engagement with climate-friendly practices by involving staff and students in understanding the climate crisis, devising and implementing solutions, and effectively disseminating this knowledge to broader audiences. Climate Change Education (CCE) has multiple definitions; however, it is ultimately concerned with ensuring that learners across all disciplines are aware of and able to respond to the risks, uncertainties, and rapid environmental and social changes that a changing climate brings. Climate Change Education further involves nurturing leaders and change-makers to innovate and lead this response. This includes considering how climate change is already affecting and will increasingly impact the industries we work in, the communities we live in, and others worldwide. In responding to these impacts, CCE requires a collective effort across all academic disciplines to ensure that actions addressing the complex and dynamic challenges we face are informed by the rich, diverse expertise offered across the Higher Education sector (Thew et al., 2021).

The world recognizes tertiary education as a cornerstone for developing leaders who can address multifaceted global challenges, including climate change, and promote sustainable development. By integrating climate issues into the curriculum, universities can foster a deep understanding of these problems and inspire positive changes in students' attitudes.

Integrating climate change study in university education involves the comprehensive integration of Climate Change Education (CCE) throughout an institution, extending beyond establishing degree programmes or specialised courses on climate change. Mainstreaming also involves embedding climate change considerations into the structures and curricula across disciplines, ensuring that all students and staff members engage with the issue. This approach complements efforts to enhance the responsiveness of academic and professional staff to climate change while supporting students in navigating a rapidly changing world. Additionally, mainstreaming should align with institutional climate commitments, such as achieving climate-friendly practices and net-zero emissions (Thew et al., 2021).

The Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) has the potential to play a pivotal role in mainstreaming climate change mitigation and justice within the Nigerian University System. While the CCMAS does not mandate university-wide courses on climate change, such as those offered in General Studies or Entrepreneurship, individual programs and disciplines have incorporated climate change mitigation and related topics into their curricula under the CCMAS. It's noteworthy that the Architecture, Agriculture, and Engineering disciplines have integrated climate change-related courses as part of the core curriculum for those fields. These are FAA 126: Introduction to Sustainable Built Environment, WAM 201: Agro-meteorology and Biogeography and Climate Change, and GET 306: Renewable Energy Systems and Technology in Architecture, Agriculture, and Engineering respectively. Additionally, these fields have specific programs addressing climate change issues beyond the common courses. Examples include Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Extension, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Forest Resources and Wildlife Management, Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, Environmental Engineering, and Wood Products Engineering.

Some disciplines, however, have climate change mitigation and related courses and topics embedded in some of their programmes. These include Medicine and Dentistry (Community Medicine), Sciences (Biology, Marine Science, Maritime Science, Biotechnology, Environmental Management and Toxicology, and Meteorology), Environmental Sciences (Environmental Standards, Environmental Management, and Geography), and Education (Social Studies and Civic Education, BSc Ed. Sustainable Development Studies, BSc Ed. Geography, and BEd Environmental Education). These climate change issues are discussed in the overview, unique features, learning outcomes, and course contents of these programmes.

The NUC can take proactive steps to mainstream climate change mitigation and justice in the future through the following:

1. Revising CCMAS: Effective development and provision of university-wide core courses on climate change mitigation create a high bar for embedding climate change education in the Nigerian University System. As the CCMAS is subject to periodic review, the NUC could revise the CCMAS to include mandatory climate change courses across all disciplines. This would ensure all graduates have a basic understanding of the subject. The Commission will also strive to achieve the incorporation of courses and topics that address climate change justice into relevant disciplines and programmes in the CCMAS.

2. Developing Resources: Working in a collaborative and productive way, the NUC and the universities could develop resources and toolkits for universities to integrate climate change education effectively into their curriculum. Toolkits in higher education serve as comprehensive resources supporting various aspects of educational delivery. By providing structured, evidence-based approaches, they enhance the quality and effectiveness of teaching, learning, administration, and overall institutional performance.

Climate change poses significant threats to education in Nigeria. Floods, droughts, and extreme heat often disrupt schooling, damage infrastructure, and increase absenteeism. Schools in flood-prone areas such as Lagos and Bayelsa have faced prolonged closures due to inundation. Integrating climate resilience into school planning is essential to minimize disruption and ensure learning continuity (British Council Nigeria, 2023).

Education is critical to addressing climate justice. Marginalised communities often bear the brunt of climate change. Targeted educational programmes can raise awareness about environmental rights and equip students from these areas to advocate for equity and sustainability (Olamide Francis, 2024). Universities and polytechnics have a dual role as centres of learning and innovation. These institutions can offer scientific solutions to climate problems through research and development while training future professionals in green technologies and environmental management (leal Filho et al., 2024).

Climate change has implications for health, agriculture, water, and livelihoods. Interdisciplinary learning that connects climate education with other subjects such as biology, economics, and social studies enables a more holistic understanding of its impacts and response strategies (IIARD Journals, 2024). Nigeria's Nationally

Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement can be realized only through an informed population. Climate education ensures that citizens not only understand national commitments but also take part in achieving them through collective actions (UNFCCC, 2022).

Funding remains a critical barrier to implementing climate education. The Climate Change Fund established under Section 15 of the Act can support teacher training, curriculum development, and the establishment of eco-clubs in schools (AUDA-NEPAD).

Educating policymakers ensures climate considerations are integrated into legislation, urban planning, and budgetary processes. This closes the gap between scientific knowledge and political action. Infrastructure resilience in education is paramount. The construction of flood-proof classrooms, provision of clean energy sources like solar panels, and access to safe drinking water align with climate adaptation goals while improving learning conditions (Richtmann Journals, 2021).

Integrating indigenous knowledge into formal education can strengthen local responses to climate change. Traditional practices such as rainwater harvesting, agroforestry, and early warning systems offer lessons for sustainability that formal curricula can adopt (UNDP, 2024). Students can act as change agents in their homes and communities. Projects such as tree planting, waste recycling, and clean-up campaigns raise environmental awareness and instill responsibility.
With climate change threatening food security, education must promote sustainable agriculture and nutrition. Agricultural science classes can teach students about climate-smart farming methods to prepare them for the realities of a warming world (FAO, 2023). Nigeria's demographic dividend- a youthful population presents an opportunity. Engaging this population through climate education can foster widespread behavioural change and innovation in environmental protection (World Bank, 2022).

Through digital platforms, education can reach remote communities with limited access to traditional schools. E-learning initiatives can incorporate climate content and build resilience in underserved areas (UNICEF Nigeria, 2023). Teachers are central to effective climate education. Continuous professional development in climate science and pedagogy ensures they are equipped to deliver accurate and engaging content.
In conclusion, the Nigerian Climate Change Act, through its various provisions, affirms the critical role of education in national climate action. The country can build a climate-resilient future driven by informed, empowered, and proactive citizens by strengthening this relationship.

I urge the Deans of Education to collaborate closely with school authorities and the National Universities Commission (NUC) to fast-track the implementation of Section 26 of the Climate Change Act. This is crucial for ensuring that our education system contributes actively to tackling climate change, one of the most urgent issues today.

I also encourage all stakeholders to leverage the climate change policies introduced by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration. These policies offer a unique opportunity to mitigate climate impacts and integrate sustainability practices into every facet of national life, including education.

Furthermore, I call upon the Committee of Deans of Education in Nigerian Universities (CODENU) to partner with the NUC at the end of this conference. Together, we must collaborate with the National Council on Climate Change to develop a concrete action plan. This plan should define clear strategies to integrate climate change education across all levels of education in Nigeria, preparing future generations to tackle environmental challenges.

As Dr. Maria Montessori said, "The education of the child must be such that it helps them grow into responsible citizens of the world." And as John Dewey wisely noted, "If we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow."

Now more than ever, it is critical to adapt our educational frameworks to address environmental realities. The time for action is now, and we have the power to create a sustainable future through education.

C-Circle Foundation's World Environment Day Debates for Secondary Schools

PHOTO GALLERY

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IDRC funded Step Change Participatory Knowledge Brokerage Training Workshop held in Tanzania, The locally led Adaptation strategy and technologies (SCALE PROJECT) research studies for Nigeria and Senegal, a partnership work of ATPS Kenya and West Africa Green Economic Development Institute (WAGEDI) Nigeria and IPAR Senegal with funding provided by IDRC.

Report – David Arome

Climate Change is Pushing Nigerian Farmers into Debt and Poverty

For many farmers in Nigeria, climate change is no longer an abstract concept; it is a real and present threat disrupting their livelihoods and driving them into deeper debt and poverty, season after season.

Mariam Aliyu was only 13 years old when she lost her parents to a fatal car accident in 2013. Being the first child of the family, she immediately took on farming in Mokwa LGA, Niger State, to cater to the rest of her siblings.

Mariam has shouldered this responsibility for 12 years, but recently, a climate-induced incident at her farm has left her with a crippling debt.

An Unending Cycle of Devastation

When Mariam first took over her parents' farm, she began with maize and yams; later, she added rice too. In all of that time, the rain never failed her; it came and leR as it was supposed to.

Recently, however, things have taken another turn: the rain has become erratic, making it impossible to predict and rendering the traditional knowledge that once guided planting and harvesting cycles ineffective. "Sometimes in 2024, the rain was delayed a little but was followed by flooding. I lost almost half of the rice," Mariam recalls with tears.

While climate change is a threat to all, small-scale farmers who make up about 80% of Nigeria's agricultural sector and account for 90% of its agricultural produce are disproportionately affected by its impacts.

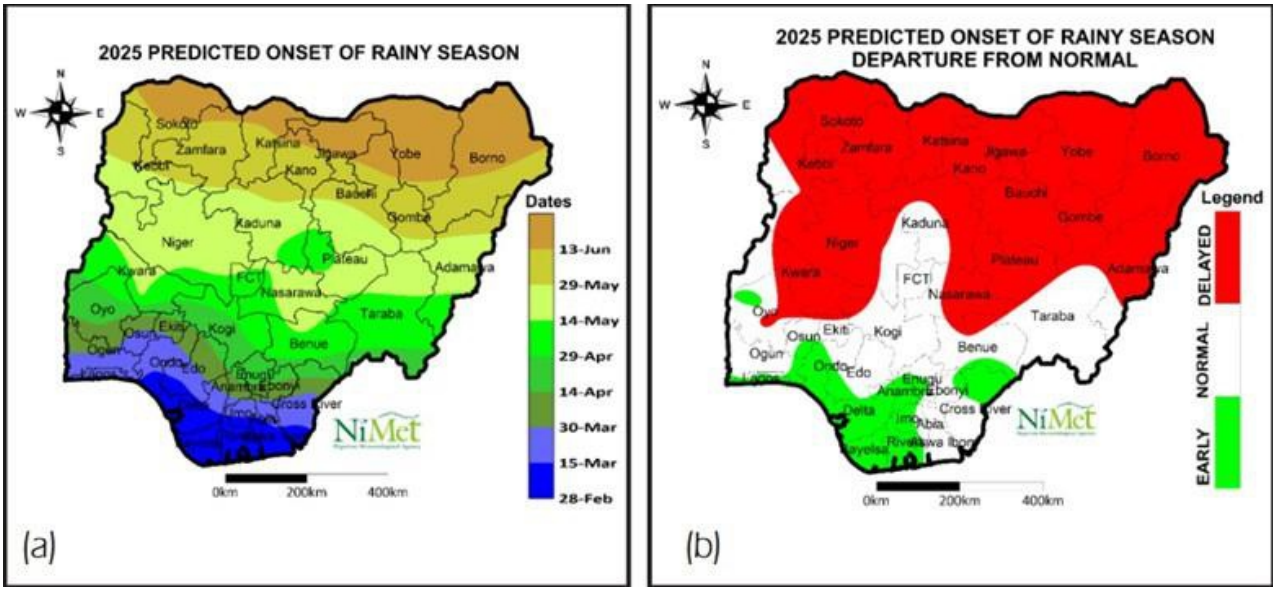
It was a Wednesday which would have passed by like any other, except it didn't, and the date now stays with her–May 28, 2025. It had rained the previous day, and Mokwa farmers, always excited at the sight of rain, were over the moon when the raindrops hit the ground. On Wednesday morning, Mariam began walking to the farm as she usually does. That day, she planned to plant some maize. On her way, she overheard some farmers saying the rain had caused flooding. Mariam quickly asked them to clarify, and when they did, she continued to her farm to see for herself. When she got there, she was met with a devastating sight; parts of her farmland were washed away. Heartbroken, she broke down in tears, remembering the debt hanging over her head.

Financial Crises

Back in May 2022, Mariam took a loan of ₦1.5 million from a Microfinance Bank for the irrigation farming of vegetables; she had hoped to make a profit with which she could clear her piling bills and repay the loan within the space of two years.

But nothing went as Mariam had planned. Like in May 2025, heavy flooding had washed away parts of her farmland in Kudu, which led to a poor harvest. She could not make enough profit to pay off the loan; she went past the deadline, only being able to pay half of it, and then she renegotiated with the bank.

The losses do not just affect Mariam's harvest but also her livelihood. For the past five years, the harvest has drastically dropped. Her hectares of farmland, where she gets 41 bags of maize and 1200 tubers of yam yearly, now hardly produce up to a 40% yield.



Predicted Onset Dates of the Rainy Season and Departure from Normal. Source: Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet)

Climate change is a long-term change in weather patterns, such as rain, temperature, and sunlight, becoming unpredictable over many years, usually 10 or more. The Climate Risks Profile of Nigeria, 2021 report, reveals that the mean temperature until 2080 may rise between 1.8 and 3.9°C.

Over 80% of farmers in Nigeria depend on rain-fed agriculture, thus increasing their vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change. Nigeria is recognised to be vulnerable to climate change impacts, ranked 160 out of 181 countries in the 2020 Global Adaptation Initiative Index (ND-GAIN Index), which measures countries' climate change vulnerability and readiness to adapt, helping prioritise resilience investments and policy action.

Climate-Induced Hardship on Mokwa Farmers

Muhammed Maje

like Mariam, many farmers in Niger's Mokwa LGA have incurred losses due to the floods brought on by the erratic nature of the rains. Muhammed Maje, a farmer in Mokwa with nearly a decade's experience, says that harvests have significantly dropped over the past five years. "Yearly, on average, I get 25 bags from maize, guinea corn, millet, and groundnut farms," Maje said, explaining that the yield from last year's farming dropped so much that he barely got 10 bags from all the crops he planted.

Crop yields in sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, are predicted to drop by 22% by 2050 due to climate change as well as a projected population of 262.9 and 401.3 million in 2030 and 2050, respectively.

Maje attributed the poor yield to late rainfall, which delayed planting, and pest invasion, eating up the plants. Due to this shortfall, in 2024, Maje got a loan of N600,000 with an eight-month

repayment plan from a Microfinance Bank to expand his farming. like Mariam, he was also unable to meet his repayment deadline due to poor harvests. Left with no choice, Maje sold off his only motorcycle to clear the debt.

Now deep in a financial crisis, Maje's only saving grace has been his wife, whom he set up in a grain-selling business during his bumper harvest years.

Climate change has shifted the planting calendar, making it difficult for farmers to predict seasons, plan ahead, and harvest on time. "Most times, farmers are in a hurry to cultivate at the first drop of rain. Without having a second thought of the on-and-off pattern of the rain, which in turn affects the yield at the end," highlighted Alhaji Shehu Kamaye, the State Youth leader, All Farmers Association of Nigeria, Niger State chapter.

Mohammed Abubakar

Mohammed Abubakar, a well-known farmer in the Ezhi community in Mokwa IGA, has also been a victim of the climate change crisis. Due to the erratic rainfall and repeated flooding, which have wiped out his crops over the years, he has been forced to replant twice, and this has, in turn, driven up his farming costs.

For nearly two decades, Abubakar has cultivated maize, pepper, guinea corn and groundnut. In that time, the past few years have been challenging, particularly 2025. "The flooding this year surpasses that of the previous years," Abubakar recalled.
Beyond flooding, trees on his farmland that once provided shade for his pepper plants and boosted harvests have been cut down by intruders, stripping the crops of natural protection and reducing his harvest. These events have caused significant losses and a decline in his income.

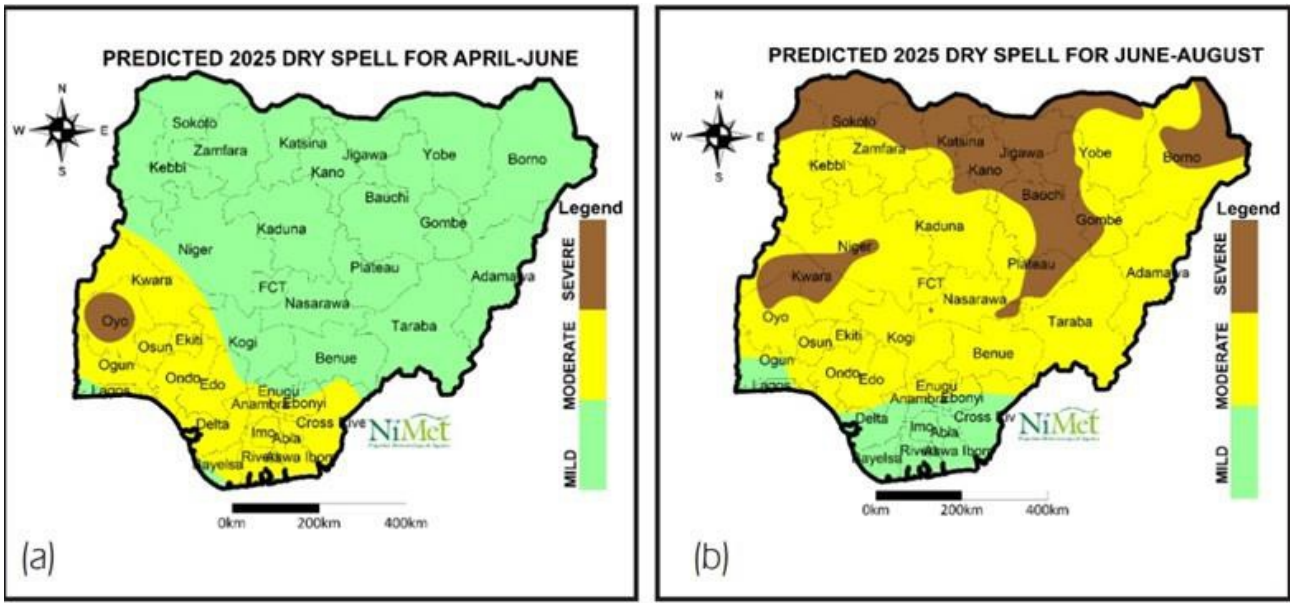
Waking up every morning with the thought of the losses, with family demands and increasing bills, throws him off balance. In 2024, he took a N1 million loan from Lapo Microfinance Bank to buy agrochemicals such as herbicides, fertilisers and other farming inputs to boost crop yield.

Like the others, Abubakar also had a hard time making a profit from the year's farming, but against all odds, he was able to repay the loan five months past the deadline, drawing from his long-term savings and support from friends.

Reacting to the climate-induced losses of farmers, Zeenrent Zamani, Team lead of the Murya Na Environmental Sustainability and Development Initiative, explains that the impacts of climate change would be easier on farmers across the country if the agricultural sector in Nigeria were enabling.

"Farmers are not protected with a financial ecosystem to thrive in catching up to climate variability," Zamani said.

Farmers Association Speak



Predicted areas of occurrence of dry spell for the 2025 Rainy Season. Source: NiMet

The Secretary and Head of Programs for the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) Niger State Chapter, Umar Dansabe explains that poor harvests were caused by the dry spells, characterised by the absence of rain, which altered the planting schedule and application of farming aids like fertiliser.

"Some crops cannot survive the dry spell, and those that survive do not produce the desired yield," Dansabe noted.

The heat waves have incurred additional expenses on farmers, especially those in irrigation farming, the application of water to the soil to support plant growth. Farmers spend more on fuelling their generator to soRen the hard ground. “The level of the dryness of the soil has increased the level of water application in their farms,” said Dansabe.

Unfortunately, the dry spells will continue to trouble farmers for a long time. A 2021 Climate Risk Profile on Nigeria shows that the water availability in the country is expected to decline by more than 75% from 3,300 m^3 per capita, per year in 2000 to about 800 m^3 by 2080, far below the United Nations 1,000 m^3 per year threshold for water scarcity.

As the threat of dry spells and heavy flooding continues to loom, AFAN says it will work harder to ensure that more farmers are not put out of business as a result. One of the primary ways it does this is by advising farmers to insure their farms for emergency situations and offering them climate literacy training to better equip them on what they’re up against.

In addition to this, the association has teamed up with the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and the National Cereal Research Institute in Niger State to link farmers to improved drought resistance seeds. Although the improved seeds are expensive, the association is discussing with the Niger State government for a possible subsidisation of their prices. In addition to these efforts, Dansabe emphasises that “more financing, continued training and adherence to NiMET reports are important to enable farmers to scale through the hells of climate shocks.”

Climate Policy Implementation Gaps

Nigeria’s National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) is a guiding document that shows how the country plans to tackle climate change across all sectors, including the agricultural sector. It was updated in June 2021 and later backed by a strong law; the Climate Change Act was signed in November 2021 to ensure the policy is put into action.

Part of the policy emphasised targeted strategies such as smart climate agriculture and actions focused on the agriculture sector. It also recognises farmers’ vulnerability to climate change impacts like drought, flooding, shiRing rainfall patterns, and soil degradation.

However, despite the vulnerability of farmers to climate threats, only seven out of Nigeria’s 36 states have adopted climate policy documents. Only Rivers and Ebonyi have further upgraded their policies to the Climate Change Act. Recently, Enugu State launched its climate change policy, climate action plan and climate education manual; the first completed subnational policy in Nigeria. “Every policy should be backed by law to give it legal footing for implementation,” Zamani emphasised.

The policy is a robust document that can help mitigate the glaring impacts of climate change. However, implementation remains the bottleneck in giving much traction to it.

“Having policies is not enough; there is a need to consistently review them in line with current trends, especially as climate change continues to reshape farming realities, risks, and resilience needs.” Dr Nwankwo Nnenna, a climate expert at the Federal Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology, noted. Most of the government policies exist on paper without implementation. The role of government goes beyond establishing policies but also enforcing them.

A Call for Action and Collaboration

Dr Chinwoke Clara Ifeanyi-Obi, a climate expert and senior lecturer from the Department of Agricultural Extension and Development Studies at the University of Port Harcourt, emphasizes the need for access to information and collaboration among stakeholders to help farmers adapt to climate change.

“Research should be more evidence-based that policy makers can use as output in making policies that will favour farmers,” Dr Nnenna stated. By mainstreaming such research findings into policy and practice can provide practical solutions to the crisis faced by Nigerian farmers.

“Farmers’ lack of knowledge about climate change makes it challenging for them to adapt and repay loans. Equipping farmers with knowledge, technology, and support is vital for their survival. But if we build their capacity so that they are able to adapt their farming system to climate change, then with a little support, they will be able to upset those debts and begin to produce at a profit instead of running at a loss,” Dr Clara noted.

In boosting crop yield, Dr Nnenna calls for investment in the form of grants, improved seeds, irrigation farming, and smart climate agriculture—innovations that empower farmers to grow more and thrive despite climate shocks.

“The plight of these farmers is real, and the need for support, education, and adaptation is urgent. The future of Nigerian agriculture hinges on the ability to address the challenges posed by climate change and ensure that farmers can thrive in the face of uncertainty,” Dr Clara added.

Without urgent, sustained investment and policy enforcement, smallholder farmers like Mariam may lose more than just their crops—they risk losing their future. Nigeria must act now.

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Policy Paper: An Inclusive and Just Energy Transition for Niger-Delta Extractive Communities in Nigeria

Olumide Onitekun, Rashidat Sanusi,
Chibuikem Agbaegbu, Opeyemi Dairo

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nigeria's clean-energy pivot is accelerating, yet the country's energy heartland—the Niger-Delta extractive communities that generate 75 percent of national export earnings—remains largely outside the transition's decision rooms and benefit streams. Decades of oil spills, gas flaring, and uneven revenue sharing have produced 4 000 km² of contaminated land, flare-linked infant-mortality rates twice the national average, and unemployment that spikes when international oil companies divest.

A justice audit of eight flagship policies and six major programs, conducted with an adapted Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTP) Scorecard Assessment, exposes four systemic gaps:

Justice pillar	Findings	Consequence if unaddressed
Distributive	< 15% of Energy Transition Plan (ETP) and Host-Community Development Trust (HCDT) flows reach host communities.	Revenue loss and widening poverty as oil jobs decline.
Recognitional	Core documents rarely name oil-bearing communities, women, or youth; no gender-disaggregated targets.	Community priorities invisible in national budgeting.
Procedural	No voting seats for community trusts on ETP working groups or NERC tariff panels.	Policies decided in Abuja, legitimacy deficit on the ground.
Restorative	Only 8% of Ogoni clean-up sites completed; new license issued while legacy pollution persists.	Health crises and litigation risks escalate.

Yet the transition also offers game-changing opportunities. Capturing 80 percent of flared gas by 2030 (NGFCP) can create 300 000 skilled jobs; the ETP's USD 23 billion renewables pipeline can cut household energy bills by 38 percent in mini-grid pilot areas; and the region's degraded mangroves could earn USD 120 million a year in carbon credits.

A Justice-Anchored Roadmap

1. Finance: launch a N200 billion Just-Transition Fund—5 percent of federal oil royalties plus climate finance—dedicating at least 15 percent of all transition spending to projects owned by host communities.

2. Governance: Amend the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) so every HCDT invests 30 percent of annual inflows in clean energy and remediation approved by elected Community Energy-Transition Committees (CETCs).

3. Land & Consent: Make Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) a pre-condition for all REA and NUPRC license; states adopt legally binding Community land Protocols.

4. Skills & Jobs: Create a Delta Green-Skills Corps to retrain 10,000 people annually in solar O&M, modular LNG, and climate-smart aquaculture, linked to mini- grid rollouts.

5. Remediation: Establish a Climate-Fund Remediation Window that allocates 50 percent of its budget to women-led clean-up and water-treatment enterprises.

6. Accountability: Publish an annual Niger-Delta Just-Transition Scorecard—a TJTP scorecard audit annexed to the national budget—tracking jobs, emissions cuts, health gains and gender equity.

A Policy Window to Write a New Social Contract

Experience from Germany's Coal Commission and South Africa's JET-IP confirms that justice clauses—written into finance, data, governance, and remediation requirements at the outset—outlive cabinet reshuffles and budget swings. Justice must therefore be more than an add-on; it has to be stitched into the very fabric of every energy-transition policy as a foundational principle. Embedding the Niger-Delta roadmap now, while momentum for transition is still strong and evolving, will turn today's debate into a binding social contract—anchored in money, information, decision-making seats, and clean-up guarantees—that secures fair outcomes generation after generation.

The Choice

Nigeria can replicate the old pattern—urban centres reap clean-energy gains while riverine towns remain impoverished—or build a global exemplar of restorative, community-owned transition. The tools, finance and policy models already exist; what is required now is decisive, justice-centred action. The moment to embed that justice—before the last barrel is pumped and the first gigawatt of new power is switched on— is now.

INTRODUCTION

The global energy landscape is at a crossroads, shaped by the competing imperatives of climate action and energy security. While the urgency to mitigate climate change has driven commitments to transition away from fossil fuels, recent geopolitical and economic shifts underscore the complexities of this transition. For instance, the United States President, Donald Trump has recently signaled a pro-fossil fuel stance, advocating that prioritizing domestic oil and gas production is essential for energy security and economic growth. Similarly, some developing countries face mounting pressure to balance climate commitments with the immediate need to expand energy access and industrialization. These tensions highlight a critical challenge: how to transition to a low-carbon future without deepening socio-economic inequalities, particularly for communities historically reliant on fossil fuel extraction.

In sub-Saharan Africa, these global tensions between energy security and climate action take on an added dimension, as the transition must also address widespread energy poverty. With over 600 million people lacking access to electricity1, the shift away from fossil fuels presents both opportunities and risks. Nigeria, as one of the world's top oil producers, faces a particularly complex challenge: while fossil fuels account for 65% of government revenue and 90% of export earnings 2. Only 60.5% of its population has reliable electricity access 3. Power outages remain frequent, and rural areas, where over 90 million Nigerians depend on traditional biomass and fossil fuels for daily activities, are disproportionately affected. This dependence not only exacerbates environmental degradation but also entrenches socio-economic inequalities, particularly in extractive communities. As Nigeria progresses on its energy transition, it must navigate the delicate balance between reducing emissions, sustaining economic stability, and ensuring that vulnerable communities are not left behind. Recognizing these challenges, Nigeria launched its Energy Transition Plan

(ETP) in 2022, targeting net-zero emissions by 2060. The plan includes transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy, using natural gas as a transitional fuel, and achieving universal energy access by 2030.4 Nigeria's energy transition holds profound implications for extractive communities, particularly in regions like the Niger Delta, which is one of Nigeria's most productive areas for oil and gas extraction. For instance, approximately 2 million barrels (320,000 m^3) are extracted daily in the Niger Delta, with an estimated 38 billion barrels of reserves. These communities in the Niger-Delta have faced decades of environmental degradation from oil spills and gas flaring, which have destroyed livelihoods, polluted water sources, and displaced populations. Therefore, if left behind the energy transition could deepen these challenges.

As Nigeria reduces its reliance on fossil fuels, extractive communities risk losing the limited economic benefits they currently receive. Declining oil revenue may also reduce financial allocations. Section 162, sub-section 2 of the Nigerian Constitution allocates 13 percent of Country's oil revenue to the oil producing communities as part of a benefit transfer scheme for the resources extracted from the state6. Despite this, the transition presents an opportunity to address historical injustices by prioritizing the inclusion of extractive communities in shaping the country's energy future. For example, deploying decentralized renewable energy systems—such as solar mini-grids—in these communities could enhance access to reliable electricity and catalyze rural economic potential.

This policy brief offers an evidence-based assessment of how Nigeria's energy transition will affect extractive communities in the Niger Delta—highlighting both risks and opportunities—and frames all findings through the four pillars of energy justice (distributive, recognitional, procedural, and restorative). It proposes strategic, people- centered interventions such as robust community-engagement frameworks, sustainable financing windows, and community-driven energy models that guarantee fair sharing of costs and benefits, acknowledge legacy harms, embed local voices in decision-making, and fund environmental and livelihood restoration. By uniting policymakers, civil-society actors, and frontline communities around these justice principles, the brief aims to advance SDG 77 while ensuring the transition is genuinely inclusive, equitable, and sustainable.

NIGERIA'S ENERGY TRANSITION LANDSCAPE

2.1 Overview

The Nigerian energy landscape is undertaking a significant transition, driven by the urgent need to mitigate climate change and address energy poverty. The country's economy has long been heavily reliant on fossil fuels, particularly oil and natural gas, which together account for approximately 65% of total government revenue.8 Fossil fuels also play a central role in electricity generation, with thermal power plants contributing about 8,457.6 MW of the nation's installed capacity of 12,522 MW, while hydroelectric plants provide an additional 1,938.4 MW9. Despite this substantial capacity, only around 60.5% of Nigeria's population has access to electricity.10 and those who are connected often experience frequent outages due to the instability of the national grid. This highlights the pressing need for a more resilient and sustainable energy system in the country.11

2.2 Government Responses to Energy Transition and Energy Access

The Nigerian government has developed a wide range of climate and energy policies to support its shift from fossil fuel dependence to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future. These frameworks reflect a growing commitment to addressing both global climate goals and domestic energy poverty challenges.

Climate Commitments and Strategic Frameworks

Nigeria's climate journey began with the ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 199412, laying the foundation for subsequent participation in global agreements, including:

•Kyoto Protocol (ratified 2004): Committed to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through mechanisms like the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), Joint Implementation (JI), and Emissions Trading, which were designed to assist countries in meeting their emissions reduction targets13.

•Paris Agreement (signed 2016, ratified 2017): Committed Nigeria to limiting temperature rise to below 2°C, with efforts to cap it at 1.5°C.

Nigeria also adopted Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on climate action in 2015 and became a signatory to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), committing to multi-hazard, resilience- based planning.

In line with its Paris Agreement obligations, Nigeria submitted its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2015 and updated it in 2021, targeting:

- 20% unconditional GHG emission reduction by 2030.
- 47% conditional reduction with international support.

Complementing this, the National Climate Change Policy (NCCP) 2021-2030 outlines a low-carbon development path and adaptation/resilience priorities. The Climate Change Act (2021) provides a legal foundation for these efforts, establishing the National Council on Climate Change Secretariat (NCCCS) and setting a net-zero emissions target between 2050-2070.

Renewable Energy and Efficiency Policies and Plans

To operationalize climate objectives, Nigeria has launched several renewable energy and efficiency policies:

- National Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Policy (NREEEP) - 2015: Targeted over 23 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, including large hydropower.

- National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) – 2015-2030: Aligned with ECOWAS regional policy and Nigeria's Vision 30:30:30; aims to deliver: 5,000 MW solar PV; 2,000 MW small hydro; 800 MW wind; and 400 MW biomass

- National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) - 2015-2030: Focuses on demand-side measures, such as: Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS), Efficient appliances, and Industrial and building retrofits

- Sustainable Energy for All (SEforAll) Action Agenda – 2016: Integrates NREAP and NEEAP and sets targets like reducing traditional firewood use by 80% by 203014.

- Renewable Energy Master Plan - 2019: Seeks to achieve 30% of electricity generation from renewables by 2030.

Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan (ETP) – 2022

The Energy Transition Plan (ETP) represents the most comprehensive framework to date, providing a roadmap to net-zero emissions by 2060 while addressing energy poverty and development goals. Its core priorities include:

- Achieving Net-Zero by 2060 across five sectors: Power, Cooking, Transport, Oil and Gas, and Industry.

- Lifting 100 million Nigerians out of poverty through job creation and clean energy access.

- Universal access to modern energy by 2030.
- GHG reduction targets: 45% by 2030, and up to 90% by 2050.
- Ending traditional biomass dependence and scaling LPG and electric/biogas cookstoves.

The ETP promotes a phased shift from petrol/diesel to renewable-backed electrification, with natural gas as a transitional fuel. In the transport sector, the plan aims for a 97% reduction in emissions via the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs), while in oil and gas, it targets reduced flaring and fugitive emissions. Since its launch, the ETP has introduced several inclusive initiatives:

- Women-in-Energy Dialogue (May 2023) to address gender-specific barriers15.

- Data Stakeholder Session (July 2023) to establish shared M&E frame works16.

- Community clean-cooking pilots (e.g., Petti village, FCT) 17 and a solar-cook stove showcase (Iponri Market, Lagos) 18.

- World Bank-supported DARES programme, targeting 17.5 million beneficiaries with solar mini- grids and home systems19.
- ETP Help-Desk, providing direct access to technical support for households and cooperatives.

Yet none of these initiatives is expressly ring-fenced for the Niger Delta and other extractive heartlands that have endured decades of oil spills, gas flaring and withheld royalties. The ETP still lacks a finance window, benefit- sharing rule-set or decision- making seat for host-community trusts, leaving the very regions that powered Nigeria's fossil economy at risk of watching the renewable boom from the sidelines. Without explicit targets and governance hooks for these communities, the transition could swap petrol for solar while repeating the same old pattern of exclusion.

Key Institutions Driving the Energy Transition

Federal Ministry of Power (FMoP): As Nigeria's lead policymaker for the electricity sector, the FMoP coordinates national strategies to deliver inclusive, sustainable, and climate-aligned power infrastructure. It supervises key agencies such as: Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), Rural Electrification Agency (REA), Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA).

National Council on Climate Change Secretariat (NCCCS): Created by the Climate Change Act (2021), the NCCCS oversees implementation of national climate policies, including: Rolling five-year carbon budgets, Climate Change Fund management, and Public-private sector compliance The NCCCS also partners with UN agencies to design Nigeria's Just Transition Framework, facilitating: Green job creation, Social inclusion, and Carbon credit markets.

Rural Electrification Agency (REA): Established under the Electric Power Sector Reform Act (2005), the REA drives electrification of underserved areas through off- grid and mini-grid systems. Flagship initiatives include Nigeria Electrification Project (NEP), Energizing Education Programme, Solar Power Naija, Distributed Access through Renewable Energy Scale-Up (DARES), Africa Mini Grids Programme (AMP), and Rural Electrification Fund (REF). These interventions contribute to universal energy access and align with the ETP's targets, particularly in reaching rural and low-income communities.

Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC): Nigeria's independent power regulator is crucial for turning energy-transition targets into bankable projects. Since the passage of the Electricity Act 2023, NERC has:

- Updated the Mini-Grid Regulations (2023) to streamline licensing and performance standards for systems up to 5 MW20.

- Adopted the AFUR cost-reflective tariff tool to give developers clear, uniform pricing templates– reducing investor risk for rural solar and hybrid grids21.

- Expanded net-metering and embedded-generation rules, enabling households and SMEs to export surplus solar power to the grid.

Together these steps lower entry barriers for decentralized renewables and help align power-sector economics with the Energy Transition Plan (ETP).

Energy Commission of Nigeria (ECN): As the government's think-tank for long-range energy planning, the ECN:

- Leads national energy-balance and demand-forecast studies that feed directly into each update of the ETP.

- Steers R&D partnerships with universities and private firms to localize Solar-PV component manufacturing and green-hydrogen prospects.

- In 2024 launched a knowledge-exchange bulletin linking state energy ministries, researchers and investors on transition topics.

By supplying data, modelling, and technology roadmaps, ECN gives policymakers the analytical backbone needed for evidence-based transition decisions.

Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC): The NDDC operates as a regional intervention body focused on development and environmental remediation in the Niger Delta. It plays a growing role in Nigeria's energy transition through:

- Lighting Up the Niger Delta: Over 56,000 solar-powered streetlights installed.

- Plans to solarize entire communities and develop industrial clusters powered by renewables.
- Launching a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) training and conversion programme for 10,000 technicians by 2027.
- Targeting up to $2 billion in climate finance through clean energy initiatives.

While these efforts represent important steps, their integration into national frameworks like the ETP remains limited, reducing opportunities for synergy and scale.

Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC): The upstream oil-and-gas regulator now embeds decarbonization in core licensing:

- Upstream Petroleum Decarbonization Template (UPDT)–from 1 Jan 2025, every field license applicant must show a low-carbon plan, methane-management measures and a renewable-energy component22.

- A 2024 strategic decarbonization drive links flare-gas commercialization, CCS pilots and nature-based offsets to national net-zero goals23.

These requirements push operators to cut flaring and integrate clean-energy solutions, aligning hydrocarbon activity with the ETP's emission-reduction pathway.

Nigerian Midstream & Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA): Tasked with gas infrastructure and fuel markets, NMDPRA is pivotal for transition fuels:

- Co-authored the National Clean-Cooking Policy (2024), anchoring LPG and CNG scale-up to replace firewood and kerosene in 30 million households by 203024.

- Issues pricing and safety guidelines that make LPG bottling, bulk storage and CNG conversion centers commercially viable.

By expanding gas-based cooking and transport fuels, NMDPRA provides the "bridge fuel" layer envisioned in the ETP.

Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA): Beyond managing sovereign-wealth capital, NSIA has become a green-finance catalyst:

- Co-launched the US $500 million Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) Fund with SEforAll, Africa 50 and ISA to crowd-in local pension-fund capital for mini-grids, SHS and storage25.

- Through its subsidiary RIPIE, co-invests in hybrid solar-hydro IPPs such as the 20 MW Shiroro extension.

These vehicles mobilize long-tenor, naira-denominated finance that utility-scale renewables and rural electrification both require.

State Governments (Post-Electricity Act 2023): With the new Act devolving power regulation, states are emerging as frontline transition actors:

- Lagos State Electricity law (2024) empowers the state to license mini-grids, set feed-in tariffs and create a state-level market operator—an early template for sub-national energy governance26.

- Other states (Kaduna, Enugu, Edo, Ekiti) are drafting similar laws or renewable-energy policies, opening space for local PPPs and climate-adaptation projects.

- State Ministries of Energy can now earmark portions of Internally Generated Revenue and climate funds for solar schools, agro-processing mini-grids and electric-bus pilots.

This decentralization, if matched with capacity-building and finance, can accelerate the rollout of clean, reliable power—especially in underserved rural and peri-urban areas.

2.3 Policy-Community Disconnect in Extractive Regions

Nigeria now boasts a dense web of climate- and energy-policy instruments, yet oil and gas-producing communities still struggle to see or shape the transition on the ground. Most frameworks reference "stakeholders" in general terms, but only a handful build in clear seats, budgets, or grievance channels for the people who have borne the brunt of spills, gas flaring, and lost livelihoods. The two tables below map (i) how far the flagship climate-energy policies embed community-inclusion safeguards and (ii) whether community-level programmes actually advance clean-energy and climate-resilience goals.

Table 1: National climate-energy policies through a community-inclusion lens

Policy / Plan	Year	Stated community-inclusion provisions	Inclusion rating*
Energy Transition Plan (ETP)/ETO	2022	The ETO's CSO/CBO, women-and-youth, and data workshops—and its clean-cooking pilots—have all taken place in Lagos and Abuja; wider "awareness roadshows" are promised, yet extractive-region CSOs and host-community representatives still have **no formal seat in transition-plan governance**.	Low-Medium

Climate Change Act	2021	Requires a public-engagement strategy and annual carbon-budget hearings	High (on paper)
National Climate Change Policy (NCCP)	2021	Drafted via nationwide consultations; calls for community-based adaptation projects	Medium–High
Electricity Act	2023	Permits states license mini-grids and set feed-in tariffs; guidelines for host communities pending	Low–Medium
NDC (Rev. 2021)	2021	Pledges "participatory implementation", but no dedicated finance window	Medium-Low
NREEEP	2015	Encourages NGO & civil-society partnership on demo projects.	Medium
NREAP / NEEAP	2015	Rural/off-grid focus; envisages state & LGA input, but lacks enforcement	Medium
Renewable Energy Master Plan	2019	Targets 30 % RE share; silent on benefit-sharing rules	Low

**High = binding duties and earmarked resources; Medium = some provisions but weak on enforcement; Low = aspirational only.*

Table 2: Community-level programme & instruments—alignment with clean energy and resilience

Programme / Instrument	Lead agency	Clean energy / resilience content	Alignment rating
Nigeria Electrification Project (NEP)	REA	Uses a published community-engagement framework for >1 000 solar mini-grids	Medium–High
DARES mini-grid scale-up	REA / WB	Results-based grants for 17.5 m beneficiaries; targets rural SMEs	Medium–High
"Light-Up the Niger Delta"	NDDC	>56 000 solar streetlights; plan for solar industrial clusters	Medium
Host Community Development Trusts (HCDT) under the PIA	NUPRC / Operators	3 % OPEX levy for social projects; *no clean-energy mandate*	Medium (development) / Low (energy)
RUWES clean-cooking project	Federal Ministry of Environment	Targets 1.3 m rural women with efficient stoves	Medium
Upstream Petroleum Decarbonization Template (UPDT)	NUPRC	From 2025, license bids must include low carbon & RE plans	Emerging–High

What the tables reveal

- Inclusion is still event-based. The ETP hosts high-profile dialogues, but extractive-region residents have no standing place on sector taskforces, nor a share of the ETP's financing pipe line.

- Legacy host-community vehicles lag the transition. HCDTs capture billions of naira each year, yet have no obligation to fund solar, clean cooking, or climate-resilience projects.

•Pilot success, weak feedback loop. REA and NDDC pilots confirm that mini-grids and solar streetlights can succeed in oil-bearing areas, yet the insights and revenues seldom loop back into national planning and the projects remain largely top-down interventions, not solutions co-designed with the communities that critical to the production and consumption of energy.

Why this matters for a just transition

Without explicit finance windows, benefit-sharing rules, and governance seats for extractive communities, Nigeria risks replacing diesel with solar while repeating the same pattern of exclusion. Bridging this gap requires:

1. Ring-fenced funding: dedicate a share of ETP and HCDT funds to community-led renewable projects in oil- and gas-producing IGAs.

2. Institutional seats: guarantee host-community and CSO representation on every ETP sector working group.

3. Score-card transparency: publish an annual Just Transition Scorecard tracking how policy targets translate into on-the-ground benefits—jobs, emissions cuts, and resilience gains for Niger Delta and other extractive regions.

Embedding these measures across all major climate and renewable-energy policies— not just the ETP—will turn abstract decarbonization goals into tangible, inclusive progress for the communities that have powered Nigeria's economy for decades.

2.4 The Case for a Just Energy Transition for Nigeria's Extractive Communities

Nigeria's energy transition has yet to sufficiently integrate the realities and interest of extractive communities into its policy implementation strategies. While national policies such as the ETP set ambitious decarbonization goals, they often fail to address the socio-economic vulnerabilities of communities that have historically depended on fossil fuel industries. Extractive regions, particularly in the Niger Delta, have endured decades of environmental degradation, economic marginalization, and limited energy access. Without deliberate efforts to incorporate their needs and perspectives, the transition risks deepening existing inequalities rather than fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

The concept of a Just Energy Transition (JET) offers a framework for ensuring that climate action does not come at the expense of the most vulnerable populations. Originating from labor movements in the 1980s, JET emphasizes the shift towards sustainable energy systems that prioritize social equity, economic inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

It seeks to mitigate the adverse effects of moving away from fossil fuels by actively involving all stakeholders, especially workers, marginalized communities, and local populations—in decision- making processes.

At the core of a just transition is the principle that no group should be treated unfairly, particularly by public policies. A 2024 ODI working paper27 provides a framework for incorporating justice in the energy transition. It comprises four key dimensions:

•Distributive Justice: Ensuring the fair distribution of the costs and benefits associated with the transition. Extractive communities should not bear the burden of economic displacement while others reap the advantages of renewable energy investments. Policies must guarantee equitable access to resources, opportunities, and financial support for alternative livelihoods.

•Recognitional Justice: Acknowledging the unique needs, histories, and vulnerabilities of oil- producing communities. These populations have suffered from decades of environmental degradation, and a just transition must prioritize their economic and social well-being rather than treating them as an afterthought in climate policies.

•Procedural Justice: Guaranteeing that all stakeholders—especially those in extractive regions—have equitable access to information and decision-making processes. Energy transition plans must incorporate transparent, participatory governance mechanisms to ensure that affected communities can shape policies that impact their future.

•Restorative Justice: Addressing historical injustices and environmental harms caused by past energy practices. This includes funding for environmental remediation, investments in sustainable local economies, and direct compensation for communities that have suffered from pollution and resource extraction.

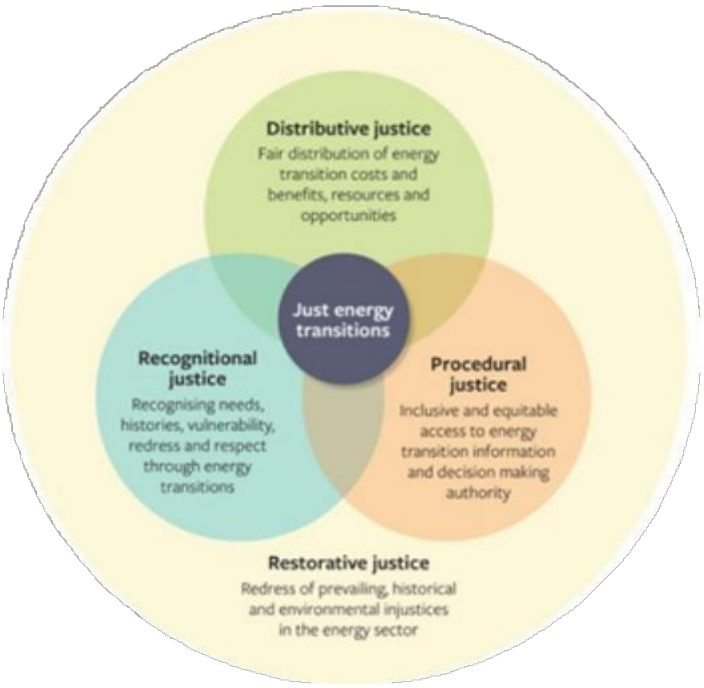


Figure 1: Four Key Dimensions of Justice Pillar Source: Steadman et. al. (2024)

Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan (ETP) does not incorporate these dimension of justice: extractive-region CSOs and host-community trusts hold no recognition in decision-making and public awareness remains patchy. Yet realities in the Niger Delta are mixed. Some enclaves already enjoy gas-fired power, royalties, CSR scholarships and jobs, while others face chronic pollution and see those rents captured by local elites or armed groups. A truly Just Energy Transition (JET) must therefore (i) safeguard existing livelihoods while hydrocarbons remain, (ii) provide bankable alternatives before any phase-down, and (iii) embed a permanent justice architecture– compensation funds, clean-up timelines and statutory representation of host trusts facilitated access to renewable energy on all transition-finance and project-approval boards.

Since oil's discovery at Oloibiri in 195628, spills, flaring and weak governance have devastated farmland and fisheries in places such as Bodo and Ogoniland29; UNEP estimates full remediation could take three decades30. These historical harms, together with the Ogoni struggle of the 1990s and today's illicit mining conflicts31 elsewhere, underscore the need for restorative and distributive justice–not a simple exit.

Figure 2: Oil from a leaking pipeline burns in Goi-Bodo, a swamp area of the Niger Delta (October 12, 2004)
Source: Austin Ekeinde/Reuters

A JET can still turn crisis into opportunity. Decentralized solar, wind and mini-hydro schemes—tied to reforestation and environmental-service jobs—can expand clean power, build skills and diversify incomes, advancing SDG 732. But success hinges on procedural and recognitional justice: town-hall consultations that include youth, women and other vulnerable groups; transparent benefit-sharing that reaches households, not just gatekeepers; and retraining programmes for workers whose livelihoods depend on oil and gas.

Targeted social-service spending, capacity-building and strict accountability for both government and companies will convert Nigeria's green ambitions into genuine social equity. Without such institutional safeguards, communities can rightly ask: "You polluted our land for decades—now you want to leave without remedy; where is the justice?"

2.5 Where the Justice Gap Persists for Extractive Communities

Decades of oil spills, gas flaring, and royalty disputes have left Niger-Delta and other extractive communities with damaged ecosystems and precarious livelihoods. A just energy transition must therefore be judged against four justice principles—Distributive, Recognitional, Procedural, and Restorative—not merely against national emission curves.

Table 3: Do Nigeria's flagship policies respect *justice for extractive regions*?

Policy / Programme	**Distributive** ***(income, jobs, infrastructure)***	**Recognitional** ***(explicit mention of Niger-Delta needs)***	**Procedural** ***(seats, votes, data-access)***	**Restorative** ***(cleanup, compensation)***
Energy Transition Plan (ETP) 2022	△ – Poverty-reduction goal but **no ring-fenced finance** for host LGAs	✗	△ – One-off dialogues (Women-in-Energy, CSO sessions) but *no standing seats* for host trusts.	✗
Climate Change Act 2021	△ – Climate Fund can *in theory* target impacted zones	△ – Mentions "vulnerable groups"	✓ – Mandates public-engagement strategy & CSO partnership §25-30	✗
NREEEP / NREAP / NEEAP 2015	△ – Rural/off-grid focus; no host-community clause	✗	△ – State/LGA consultation suggested, not enforced	✗
Electricity Act 2023	△ – States may reserve tariffs for affected LGAs	✗	△ – Devolves licensing; host voices depend on state law	✗
Host-Community Dev. Trusts (PIA)	✓ – 3 % OPEX levy to host funds	✓	△ – Trustees picked by operators; limited transparency	△ – Allows remediation spending but no clean-energy mandate
REA Mini grid / DARES	✓ – Results-based grants; 17.5 m beneficiaries targeted	△	△ – Uses published community-engagement framework	✗
NDDC 'Light-Up' Solar Streetlights	✓ – 56 000 solar lamps in Niger Delta	✓	△ – Community input unclear	△ – No direct remediation budget

Key: ✓ = strong provision | △ = partial / aspirational | ✗ = absent

Justice diagnosis

1. Distributive justice: Flows of climate and energy finance still bypass oil-bearing lGAs. The only automatic channel–the 3% Host-Community levy–has no obligation to fund renewables or clean- cooking projects, and ETP financing dashboards list zero host-community earmarks.

2. Recognitional justice: Extractive-region needs are seldom named. Apart from the PIA, national strategies refer generically to "vulnerable" or "rural" groups, glossing over the unique legacy burdens borne by Niger-Delta communities.

3. Procedural justice: Engagement is event-based, not institutional. The ETP's Women-in-Energy Dialogue and stakeholder workshops are welcome, but host-community trusts hold no voting seats on ETP sector taskforces, NCCC carbon-budget hearings, or NERC tariff reviews.

4. Restorative justice: Environmental cleanup and livelihood repair remain peripheral. Neither the ETP, NREEEP, nor mini-grid programmes link new energy investments to soil-and-water remediation or compensation for decades of extraction damage.

Why these matters

Unless distributive, recognitional, procedural and restorative justice are baked into every major policy, the transition risks swapping diesel for solar while repeating old patterns of exclusion. Extractive communities could again shoulder environmental scars—this time without the meagre royalties that once compensated them.

Justice-centered reform for policymakers

Justice pillar	Immediate action	Responsible body
Distributive	Earmark **15 % of ETP and Climate-Fund capital** for host-community clean-energy and remediation projects; allow HCDTs to count such spending against levy obligations.	MoF, NCCC, NUPRC
Recognitional	Amend NREEEP & Electricity Act regulations to *name and prioritize* extractive communities for mini-grid and clean-cooking subsidies.	FMoP, NERC, State Governments
Procedural	Guarantee **two host-community seats** on every ETP sector working group; publish minutes in local languages.	Energy Transition Office
Restorative	Create a **Just Transition Remediation Window**—funded by carbon-credit revenues and HCDT surpluses—for oil-spill clean-up, mangrove restoration, and livelihood grants.	NDDC, NOSDRA, NSIA

Embedding these justice levers will convert Nigeria's impressive stack of policies into a **people-centered, extractive-region-inclusive energy transition**—one that repairs the past while securing a sustainable future.

3 EVIDENCE-BASED ANALYSIS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION ON EXTRACTIVE COMMUNITIES IN THE NIGER-DELTA

3.1 Introduction and Methodology

The energy transition in Nigeria presents both significant challenges and potential opportunities for extractive communities, such as the Niger Delta. Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan (ETP), which aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060, marks a crucial shift toward renewable energy and low-carbon development. While this transition poses socio-economic risks—such as job losses and economic disruptions in oil- and gas-producing regions—it also creates new prospects for sustainable livelihoods and economic diversification. Drawing on recent analyses, policy documents, and direct engagements with local communities, this section explores both the challenges and opportunities that the transition presents for these communities.

The analysis employs a mixed-method approach, drawing from empirical evidence in the form of reports from international organizations, government agencies, and civil society groups; case studies from affected communities; statistical data on economic trends, employment, and energy access; and perspectives from key stakeholders, including local community members, industry players, and policymakers. In addition, this study incorporates insights from focus group discussions held during the Yar'Adua Foundation event on Shaping an Inclusive Energy Transition in the Niger Delta33. The study engaged local communities, including and Eteo Eleme in Rivers State; Koroama, Ikarama, Gbarain, and Ekpetiama in Bayelsa State; as well as Akpet Central, Boki, and Biase in Cross River State. Participants included community leaders, women leaders, youth, and other residents, whose lived experiences provide critical insights into the socio-economic and environmental realities of the transition.

Figure 3: Focus Group and Interactive Session Held During the YarAdua Foundation Event

3.2 Socio-Economic and Environmental Challenges

Economic Vulnerability and Fiscal Instability

Extractive communities in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta, face acute economic risks as global fossil fuel demand declines and international oil companies divest. According to NEITI's 2023 report, Nigeria's oil revenues fell by 15% between 2022 and 2023, while production volumes dropped by 8% during the same period34. This decline directly threatens the fiscal stability of states like Rivers, Bayelsa, and Delta, where oil revenues fund up to 80% of state budgets through statutory allocations and derivation funds. The BudgIT analysis further highlights that oil-producing regions account for 79.37% of Nigeria's exports but remain plagued by underdevelopment, with minimal infrastructure and social services despite decades of resource extraction35.

The ETP's push to phase out fossil fuels risks exacerbating unemployment in these regions. In the Niger Delta, between 45% and 75% of the local workforce is employed in the oil and gas sector36, including roles in drilling, logistics, and ancillary services. Without targeted reskilling programs, workers in traditional energy sectors risk being leR behind as renewables expand. For example, while Nigeria's Gas Flare Commercialization Program (NGFCP) aims to reduce emissions and convert flared gas into economic value—potentially creating up to 300,000 direct and indirect jobs— it is unlikely to absorb displaced workers unless complemented by vocational training in sectors to upskill workers37.

Findings from local community engagements confirm these economic vulnerabilities. Across all states, communities reported severe and consistent economic hardships:

•Reduced Agricultural Productivity: Farmers in Bayelsa and Rivers reported declining crop yields due to pollution and soil degradation, making agricultural livelihoods unsustainable.

•Declining Fisheries Output: Fishermen in Cross River cited reduced fish stocks due to pollution and river contamination, directly impacting their income and food security.

•Youth Unemployment: Communities emphasized that many young people remain jobless due to a lack of alternative economic opportunities outside the oil sector.

Figure 4: A man holds dead fish from an oil polluted river in Ogoniland, Rivers State on September 18, 2020
Source: Afolabi Sotunde/Reuters

Environmental Remediation and Health Outcomes

Decades of oil spills and gas flaring have rendered extractive zones ecological "wastelands". For instance, between 1976 and 2006, there were at least 7,000 oil spills in the region, affecting an area of more than 2,500 square kilometres38. Between January 2019 and April 2021, a total of 881 oil spills were recorded across 12 states in Nigeria, according to data from the government-run satellite tracker, NOSDRA. Notably, 77% of these spills occurred in just three major oil-producing states. During this period, approximately 43,000 barrels of oil were lost, with an estimated value of $3 million on the international market and 1.23 billion naira in the national market. These figures continue to rise as new spills are reported daily39.

These disasters have destroyed farmland, fisheries, and drinking water sources, compromising food security and creating a cycle of poverty, with over 47% of the population living below the poverty line40. The ETP's emphasis on reducing flaring and

methane leaks offers hope for environmental recovery, but progress remains slow. For example, the NGFCP aims to commercialize flared gas into liquefied natural gas (ING) and compressed natural gas (CNG), yet only 12% of flared gas volumes were captured as of 202341.

Health outcomes in these regions are equally dire. A 2019 UNEP study linked oil pollution to 16,000 infant deaths annually in the Niger Delta due to respiratory illnesses and contaminated water42. Transitioning to cleaner energy could mitigate these risks, but communities demand immediate remediation. The Nigerian government's Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP), tasked with Ogoni land cleanup, has been criticized for inefficiencies, with less than 10% of pledged sites restored since 201643.

Findings from the community engagements further highlight:

- Severe Pollution of Farmlands and Rivers: Farmers in Rivers and Bayelsa reported the destruction of crops and soil infertility due to oil contamination.

- Air and Water Pollution: Communities in Cross River cited worsening air quality, with frequent cases of respiratory illnesses attributed to gas flaring and industrial emissions.

- Health Crises: Participants in Rivers and Bayelsa frequently cited respiratory issues, skin conditions, and water contamination. Women in Cross River noted reproductive health challenges and vision problems, underscoring a gendered dimension of gas flare-related health impacts.

Figure 5: Farmland constantly ruined by oil contamination, destroying local livelihoods.

Source: Justice for Bayelsa

Environmental Degradation

With the energy transition, there will be an increase in demand for raw materials required for renewable energy technologies, such as lithium for batteries and rare earth metals for wind turbines. This demand often results in intensified mining activities, which can lead to habitat destruction, soil erosion, and water pollution. For instance, studies have shown that lithium mining in regions like the Atacama Desert in Bolivia has led to a 7% annual increase in mining area, accompanied by severe environmental impacts such as decreased vegetation cover and rising temperatures. Additionally, the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources often requires more land for equivalent energy production. Wind farms and solar arrays typically occupy significantly larger areas than traditional coal or gas plants. This increased land use can lead to habitat fragmentation and loss of biodiversity, particularly if these installations are placed in ecologically sensitive areas. Furthermore, bioenergy production can exacerbate land use changes and deforestation if agricultural resources are diverted from food production to energy crops.

Another critical aspect of environmental degradation associated with the energy transition is the potential for increased pollution from mining activities. The extraction of materials necessary for renewable technologies can result in significant ecological disturbances, including contamination of local water sources and soil degradation. Industrial mining operations often lead to long-term ecological damage that threatens both wildlife and human populations living nearby. Moreover, while renewable energy sources are generally considered more environmentally friendly than fossil fuels, their production processes can still contribute to greenhouse gas emissions if not managed properly. For example, the manufacturing of solar panels involves energy- intensive processes that may rely on fossil fuels, potentially offsetting some of the environmental benefits gained from their use. Therefore, it is imperative to address the associated environmental degradation. Policymakers must implement stringent regulations on mining practices, promote sustainable land use planning, and invest in technologies that minimize ecological footprints throughout the lifecycle of renewable energy systems.

Energy Poverty Rise

Nigeria has one of the highest rates of energy poverty globally, 49 with approximately 92 million people lacking access to electricity. Transitioning to renewable energy requires

substantial investment in infrastructure, including power generation, transmission, and distribution systems, which are currently inadequate to support this shift. The ETP estimates that Nigeria will need approximately USD 410 billion above business-as-usual spending between 2021 and 2060 to achieve net-zero emissions. Additionally, the initial costs associated with renewable technologies can be prohibitive for extractive communities as it predominantly comprises rural areas. There are compelling reasons to believe that transitioning to clean energy lower the overall cost of the energy system in the long run, driven by the widespread adoption of efficient technologies and a reduced reliance on (imported) fossil fuels.

However, this reduction in costs is not linear over time. In the short- and medium-term, the energy transition will lead to higher energy costs. This means that energy transition may increase the problem of energy poverty as affordability and accessibility of energy for the energy poor are also an important consideration for the transition52. International research has shown that sustainable energy technologies – such as electric vehicles, solar panels, efficient appliances and LED light bulbs – are often only used by higher-income households53. There is therefore a clear risk that the energy transition will not include all but will lead to increasing inequality.54 Necessary investments in sustainable technology may also lead to increased energy poverty.

Community engagements revealed additional concerns:

- Affordability of Renewable Energy: Many residents fear that clean energy alternatives will remain unaffordable due to high upfront costs, exacerbating energy poverty.

- Unequal Energy Access: Rural communities in Cross River reported a lack of electricity access, highlighting the risk of deepening inequalities if the transition does not prioritize off-grid solutions.

Potential Community Displacement

Nigeria is endowed with large and small rivers and natural falls that are potential sources for hydroelectricity to serve both urban and rural populations. With a total installed capacity of 2,064 MW, Nigeria is the 8th largest hydropower generator in

Africa.55 And China plays a major role in Nigeria's hydropower sector. The Mambilla Hydroelectric Power Station on the Dongo river in Taraba State, which is currently under development, will be the largest power generating installation in Nigeria with a capacity of 3,050 MW56. The total budget is 5.8 billion USD, of which 4.9 billion USD (85%) is provided by the EXIM Bank of China and other Chinese lenders, while the Nigerian government pays the 15% balance. It is expected that the Chinese companies Sino hydro and China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) will start construction. And the dam is expected to displace 100,000 people in Taraba State. Likewise, the Zungeru Hydropower Dam in Niger State, with a 700 MW capacity, is also supported by the EXIM Bank of China57. Chinese EXIM covers 975 million USD through a preferential loan, while the remaining 25% of the total 1.3 billion USD project is funded by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Construction started in 2013 by the Consortium of China National Electrical Equipment Corporation (CNEEC) and Sino hydro. As many as 98 villages from three local government areas (Shiroro, Rafi and Wushishi) are affected by the project.58

3.3 Opportunities for Extractive Communities in Nigeria's Energy Transition

Economic Diversification through Renewable Energy Investments

The ETP's $23 billion investment target for renewable energy infrastructure creates unprecedented opportunities for extractive communities to transition from fossil fuel dependency to sustainable livelihoods59. Solar mini-grids, biogas systems, and decentralized energy projects—prioritized in the plan—could empower communities to become active stakeholders in energy production.

A study by Heidi in 2010 states the employment level per $1 million demand is approximately three times greater for the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency industry than for fossil fuel (FF) industries. This implies that a shiR to clean energy will result in positive net employment impacts60. For instance, community-owned solar farms in oil-rich states like Rivers and Bayelsa could generate local employment in installation, maintenance, and grid management, addressing the prevailing unemployment rates. A 2023 study by Ubani and Effiong found that renewable energy projects in Abia and Akwa Ibom states increased household incomes by 22% through direct jobs and ancillary services like battery recycling and agro processing powered by clean energy61.

Environmental Remediation and Green Job Creation

More than 4,000 km² of Niger-Delta land remains contaminated by decades of spills

and flaring, yet the same gas now lost to the atmosphere can underpin a twin strategy of restoration and local industrialization. Nigeria's Gas Flare Commercialization Programme, which seeks to capture 80 percent of flared gas by 2030, is projected to create about 300,000 jobs along new value chains in pipeline construction, modular ING, carbon-credit verification and leak detection62. Redirected IPG and other by-products can supply a domestic clean-cooking market that reduces the 128,000 annual deaths linked to indoor air pollution 63 while supporting women-led enterprises that assemble stoves or build biogas digesters.

At the same time, reliable feedstock from captured gas can anchor petrochemical clusters producing plastics, fertilizers and lubricants, enabling oil-bearing communities to move from raw-material outposts to diversified industrial hubs. By tying remediation funds and local-content rules to these gas-based and renewable offshoots, Nigeria can convert ecological repair into a catalyst for broad- based, community-anchored prosperity.

Policy Advocacy and Community-led Governance

A key opportunity lies in transforming energy governance through inclusive policymaking. Establishing a National Energy Transition Platform that actively incorporates community voices into decision-making can ensure that the transition is both equitable and sustainable.

By prioritizing local engagement, the government can address the unique concerns of extractive communities and foster a sense of ownership in the transition process. For example, the Host Communities Development Trust—established under Nigeria's Petroleum Industry Act (PIA)—could be repurposed to fund renewable energy cooperatives rather than legacy oil projects. Communities in Delta State have already used similar trusts to pilot solar-powered water treatment plants, reducing reliance on oil companies for basic services64.

Civil society organizations like Spaces for Change (S4C) advocate for legislative reforms to ensure 40% local content quotas in renewable energy contracts, mirroring policies in South Africa's wind sector. Such measures would enable communities to supply materials like solar panel mounts fabricated from recycled oil pipelines, blending environmental cleanup with industrial innovation.

Leveraging Transition Finance for local Development–With Safeguards

Meeting the ETP's US $410 billion investment target by 2060 could channel sizeable climate-finance flows– carbon-offset revenues, green bonds, concessional loans– into Niger-Delta communities. Degraded mangroves and abandoned oil-palm estates, for example, are prime candidates for REDD + projects that might earn roughly US $120 million per year in carbon credits while restoring ecosystems65. International partnerships, like the World Bank's $750 million power sector recovery program, could subsidize community solar hubs linked to agricultural processing zones, enhancing food security and energy access 66. Redirecting a portion of derivation funds– currently allocated to oil-producing states–toward renewable energy training centers could address skill gaps and prepare the communities for a post-oil future. Bayelsa State's proposed Green Technology Academy, funded by 5% of its monthly derivation revenue, aims to train 5,000 youths annually in solar installation and e-mobility maintenance67.

Yet such finance can just as easily disenfranchise communities if profit-sharing, land-tenure and consent rules are weak. Carbon projects that ignore customary rights or funnel rents to intermediaries risk repeating the very inequities the transition seeks to end. To avoid this, all climate-finance deals should (i) pass Free, Prior and Informed Consent audits certified by Community Energy-Transition Committees, (ii) earmark a minimum share of credit revenue for locally owned clean-energy or livelihood projects, and (iii) publish annual benefit-sharing accounts. Only with these safeguards will transition finance become a genuine engine of inclusive development rather than another top-down extraction of local value.

Gender and Youth Inclusion in the Green Economy

Women and young people in oil-bearing areas can tap the energy transition only if generic "green jobs" schemes are adapted to local realities. National programmes such as Solar Sister Nigeria already show that training women to retail solar lanterns and clean cookstoves can raise monthly incomes68, yet few chapters operate south of Port Harcourt. Youth-focused e-mobility ventures like MAX.NG or Revive Electric have generated more than 52,000 jobs nationwide, but almost none of the associated battery-recycling or charging-station work is anchored in the Niger Delta. The one notable exception is the YEAC-Nigeria's Community Energy and Development initiative, whose solar mini-grid pilot in Umuolu, Delta State, cut generator costs for local businesses and created maintenance jobs for trained youths. Scaling such as socially embedded models–rather than relying on generic national roll-outs–will allow gender and youth inclusion to become a tangible pillar of a just transition in extractive communities.

4. COMMUNITY-CENTRED NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR EXTRACTIVE COMMUNITIES IN THE NIGER- DELTA

4.1 Method and Scope

To move beyond anecdote, the assessment applies an adapted Territorial Just Transition Plan (TJTP) Scorecard Assessment by WWF71—to five livelihood domains raised during the focus group discussion held at the Yar'Adua-Foundation event on Shaping an Inclusive Energy Transition in the Niger Delta (Rivers, Bayelsa, Cross River 2024). Each justice pillar—Distributive (D), Recognitional (R), Procedural (P), Restorative (Re)—is scored 0-3 based on hard numbers already documented in Section 3. Where a score is below 2, the table cites the data that triggered the shortfall and lists a Niger-Delta-specific policy action.

Domain	D	R	P	Re	Data anchor from Section 3
Jobs & livelihoods	1	1	1	0	o 45–75% of local jobs tied to oil/gas. o NGFCP could add 300 000 clean-gas jobs.
Land & resource rights	1	0	0	1	o Customary owners rarely consulted on energy land deals. o Mambila dam would displace 100 000 people.
Environmental health	1	1	1	0	o 4000 km² polluted: 881 spills 2019-21, 77% in Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta. o UNEP links 16 000 infant deaths/yr to pollution. o < 10% of HYPREP sites restored.
Clean-energy access	1	1	1	–	o 92 m Nigerians lack power: 62% Delta households on diesel. o Umuolu mini grid cut energy spend by 38%.
Gender & youth inclusion	1	0	1	–	o Solar Sister chapters south of Port Harcourt < 10% of national total. o 52 000 e-mobility jobs, but few in Delta. YEAC pilot in Umuolu created youth O&M jobs.

Scoring key 0 = absent, 1 = weak, 2 = moderate, 3 = strong

Reading the scores

- **Distributive justice** is weakest on livelihoods and clean energy: most transition funds still bypass host communities.
- **Recognitional and procedural gaps** dominate land governance, with FPIC largely nominal.
- **Restorative justice** is the worst-performing pillar overall: huge pollution legacies contrast with meagre clean-up delivery.

4.2 Priority Needs and Policy Actions

Domain	Niger-Delta-specific need	National lever	Sub-national lever
Livelihood security	Replace falling oil wages with clean-energy and agro-processing jobs.	Tie every NGFCP flare-capture or marginal-field license to a **25% local hiring quota** and a ring-fenced skills fund drawn from the Host-Community Development Trust (HCDT) levy.	Establish **Green Skills Corps** in each oil-producing state, run by TVET boards and funded from derivation revenue.

Land & resource governance	Protect customary tenure as solar farms, pipelines and CCS facilities expand.	Embed **statutory Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)** in the Petroleum Act's environmental regulations; require FPIC proof in all REA and NDPHC tenders.	Enact **Community Land Protocols**—co-signed by community development association, youth councils and traditional rulers—that register communal plots and publish compensation schedules.
Environmental remediation & health	Clean up 4000 km² of polluted land and waterways; cut flare-related infant deaths.	Create a **Just-Transition Remediation Window** in the national Climate Change Fund, capitalized with carbon-credit revenues and HCDT surpluses; set a three-year target to close all post-2015 spill sites.	Mandate state ministries of health to run **pollution-linked disease surveillance** and channel 10% of ecological funds to potable-water kiosks powered by solar.
Affordable clean energy	End the diesel-generator trap; electrify riverine settlements.	Reserve **15% of ETP capital** for mini-grid subsidies in oil-bearing LGAs and offer 0 % import duty on solar balance-of-system parts fabricated locally.	Launch a **Delta Mini-Grid Accelerator** with zero-interest connection loans and a social tariff for the first 50 kWh/month, managed by state electricity markets (enabled by the 2023 Electricity Act).
Gender & youth inclusion	Turn "green jobs" rhetoric into real pay-packets for women and youths.	Insert a **40 % gender-and-youth quota** in all national renewable-energy procurement frameworks; channel SE4ALL grants through women's savings groups.	Scale the YEAC solar-mini-grid model via revolving funds held by youth cooperatives; partner NYSC to place engineers as "clean-energy fellows" across host LGAs.

What success looks like by 2030

1. At least **15 % of all ETP and HCDT disbursements** flow directly to host-community green enterprises.
2. Every new energy project operates under a published, FPIC-compliant land protocol.
3. Pollution-linked infant mortality in core Delta LGAs falls by **50 %** from 2019 levels.
4. Half a million households shift from diesel to mini-grid power.
5. Women and youth secure meaningful representation and full voting voice on all state energy boards.

A joint **Niger-Delta Just-Transition Scorecard**, issued annually by the National Council on Climate Change Secretariat and a regional CSO consortium, will keep federal and state actors accountable for hitting these justice-based milestones.

5. CASE STUDIES AND BEST PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY-INCLUSIVE AND JUST ENERGY TRANSITIONS

5.1 Introduction

As Nigeria charts its own energy-transition pathway, looking outward can illuminate what works and what should be avoided, especially when the goals are inclusion, justice, and economic resilience. Around the world, several countries have steered community-centered shifts away from fossil fuels through strong stakeholder dialogue, equitable financing, and targeted safety-nets for at-risk groups. The brief case studies below showcase those experiences. They are not blueprints to be copied wholesale, but lenses through which Nigeria can distil principles and adapt them to its distinct political, economic and cultural terrain—so that any solution ultimately fits local realities rather than importing a one-size- fits-all model.

5.2 Germany's Just Transition in Coal Regions

Background:

Germany, through its Energiewende (Energy Transition) policy, has been systematically phasing out coal while supporting affected communities. In 2020, the German government passed a law to end coal use by 2038, ensuring a structured transition with socio-economic safeguards72.

Key Strategies:

- Community-Centered Decision-Making: The government established a Coal Commission consisting of representatives from affected regions, industry, labor unions, environmental groups, and civil society to ensure broad participation in decision-making.

- Economic Diversification: Germany invested €40 billion in alternative industries, including renewable energy, technology parks, and green infrastructure projects in former coal-dependent regions.

- Reskilling and Workforce Transition: Programs were developed to train former coal workers in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and digital industries to ensure employment continuity.

lessons for Nigeria:

- Establish a National Energy Transition Committee with community representation to ensure inclusive policymaking.

- Create economic diversification zones in the Niger Delta and other extractive regions, with government support for green industries.

- Implement workforce reskilling programs to transition oil and gas workers into renewable energy jobs.

5.3 South Africa's Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP)

Background:
South Africa, a coal-dependent country, developed the Just Energy Transition Investment Plan (JET-IP) to phase out coal while prioritizing community welfare. This initiative is supported by a $8.5 billion financing package from international partners73.

Key Strategies:

- Blended Financing for Just Transition: The JET-IP leveraged public-private partnerships and concessional loans to fund renewable energy projects and community-driven enterprises.

- Decentralized Renewable Energy Development: local governments were empowered to establish off- grid solar and wind projects, ensuring direct community benefits.

- Workforce Development and Employment Support74:
  - The Eskom Youth Employment Service Programme provides on-the-job training for unemployed youth, equipping them with practical skills that enhance their employability not only within Eskom but across multiple sectors.
  - Participants benefit from mentorship opportunities where experienced professionals provide industry insights, career guidance, and support.
  - This initiative helps bridge the skills gap in South Africa's energy sector while ensuring that young people, especially in coal-dependent regions, are equipped for emerging job opportunities in renewables.

- Social Protection for Vulnerable Groups: Affected communities received direct financial assistance, social welfare programs, and retraining initiatives for green jobs.

Lessons for Nigeria:

- Develop a Just Energy Transition Fund (JETF) with blended financing mechanisms to support renewable energy projects in extractive communities.

- Strengthen off-grid and mini-grid renewable solutions for rural electrification.

- Implement social protection policies such as temporary basic income or employment guarantees for workers displaced by the transition.

- Establish youth employment and skills development programs within Nigeria's energy sector to train young people in renewables, similar to Eskom's initiative.

5.4 Canada's Transition Support for Oil Sands Workers

Background:
Canada, particularly Alberta, has faced challenges transitioning away from its carbon-intensive oil sands industry. In response, the government launched programs to support workers and communities affected by declining fossil fuel jobs75.

Key Strategies:

- Worker Transition Funds: The Canadian government created the Coal Workforce Transition Fund, offering compensation, relocation assistance, and training grants for displaced workers.

- Regional Economic Development Plans: The government collaborated with local industries to identify new growth sectors, such as clean technology and advanced manufacturing.

- Indigenous Community Engagement: Indigenous groups were given direct decision-making power in clean energy projects, ensuring cultural and economic benefits.

Lessons for Nigeria:

- Establish worker support programs to provide financial aid and retraining for oil and gas workers.

- Design regional transition plans in partnership with communities to identify new economic opportunities.

- Strengthen inclusion of host communities and indigenous groups in energy transition planning and project ownership.

5.5 Denmark's Community-Owned Renewable Energy Model

Background:
Denmark has successfully transitioned towards renewables, with over 50% of its electricity coming from wind and solar. A key factor in this success is the community-owned energy model that ensures local benefits76.

Key Strategies:

- Community Ownership of Energy Projects: Danish law mandates that at least 20% of new renewable projects must be community-owned, allowing local populations to share in energy profits.

- Financial Incentives for local Participation: The government provides low-interest loans and grants for communities to invest in wind and solar projects.

- Direct Benefits to Residents: local households and businesses receive discounted electricity rates from nearby renewable projects.

Lessons for Nigeria:

- Introduce community-ownership models for solar farms, mini-grids, and wind projects in oil-producing states.

- Provide low-interest financing mechanisms for cooperatives and local enterprises to invest in clean energy.

- Develop policies that mandate profit-sharing agreements between renewable energy developers and host communities.

5.6 Key Insight from Case Studies

The case studies above highlight successful strategies for inclusive energy transitions that Nigeria can adapt. To ensure an equitable transition, Nigeria should focus on:

1. Institutionalizing participatory decision-making, such as creating a National Energy Transition Platform with community representation.

2. Investing in economic diversification by channeling funds into green industries, digital economy, and energy efficiency programs.

3. Establishing a Just Energy Transition Fund (JETF) to blend public and private finance for renewable energy investments.

4. Strengthening social protection programs, including worker retraining, financial compensation, and relocation support for affected communities.

5. Promoting decentralized renewable energy solutions and community-owned projects to ensure local participation and benefits.

By integrating these best practices, Nigeria can avoid the socio-economic pitfalls of energy transitions and build an energy future that is inclusive, sustainable, and community driven.

6. STAKEHOLDER-ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY FRAMEWORK FOR A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION IN THE NIGER DELTA

6.1 Why a Purpose-Built Framework Is Needed

Sections 2 and 4 showed that most national climate-energy instruments treat Niger-Delta communities as “consulted” rather than “empowered.” To close that justice gap, engagement must be systematic, data-driven and anchored around livelihood security, land & resource governance, Environmental remediation & health, Affordable clean energy, and Gender & youth inclusion. The framework below blends lessons from Germany’s Coal Commission, South Africa’s JET-IP and Denmark’s community-ownership model with the governance deficits identified in Table 1 (low inclusion scores) and Table 3 (weak procedural and restorative justice).

6.2 Justice Principles that Anchor the Engagement Framework

The stakeholder architecture proposed in this brief is built around the four universally recognized pillars of energy-justice. Each pillar answers a concrete question—"Who gets what?", "Whose story counts?", "Who sits at the table?", "Who fixes the damage?"—and then converts that answer into a design rule for Nigeria's transition institutions.

Justice pillar	What it means in plain language	How it must show up in Niger-Delta engagement and policy
Distributive – 'Who gets what?'	Benefits (jobs, revenues, infrastructure) and burdens (pollution, job losses) must be shared fairly.	*Finance rule:* set aside a fixed share of Energy Transition Plan (ETP) money, Host-Community Development Trust (HCDT) levies and state derivation funds for projects that are **owned or co-owned by host communities**—for example, a 30 % allocation to local clean-energy co-operatives and remediation SMEs.
Recognitional – 'Whose story counts?'	Policy must acknowledge the unique history, culture and daily realities of oil-bearing communities—especially women and youth.	*Data rule:* every federal or state energy programme must publish a **Niger-Delta impact baseline** (gender-disaggregated jobs, health, land use) and update it annually, so that host-community experiences are visible and measurable.
Procedural – 'Who sits at the table?'	Communities must have real decision-making power, not just consultation.	*Governance rule:* create **Community Energy-Transition Committees (CETCs)** in every oil-producing LGA and give them voting seats on ETP sector working groups, NERC tariff hearings and state electricity boards. Minutes and budgets are published online and on community noticeboards.
Restorative – 'Who fixes the damage?'	The transition must repair past harm—polluted land, lost livelihoods, health crises—before moving on.	*Remediation rule:* establish a **Just-Transition Remediation Window** in the national Climate Change Fund. At least 50 % of its disbursement goes to clean-up contracts and health-monitoring projects led by local women's and youth groups; no new energy license is issued until legacy pollution at the site is under an approved remediation plan.

Source: Author

Why spell the principles out?

Experience from Germany's Coal Commission and South Africa's JET-IP shows that when justice rules are written into financing, data, governance and remediation requirements *up front*, they survive political turnover and budget cycles. By translating each pillar into a binding rule of money, information, seats and clean-up, Nigeria can ensure that the Niger-Delta engagement framework is not just a set of workshops, but a standing, enforceable system that guarantees fair outcomes throughout the transition.

6.3 Engagement Architecture

- **Community Energy-Transition Committees (CETCs).** Facilitate or recognize the establishment of one in every oil-producing community; 51 % elected residents, at least 40 % women and youths. Mandate: vet ESIA reports, co-design mini-grid tariffs, monitor remediation contracts.
- **National Energy-Transition Platform.** Co-chaired by the Energy Transition Office and a Niger-Delta CSO coalition; receives annual TJTP scorecards and can trigger policy revisions.
- **Just-Transition Dialogue Cycle.** Quarterly town halls rotating across host LGAs; minutes become legally admissible inputs for rulemaking.

6.4 Key Action Areas

Domain	Immediate step	Lead actor	Justice pillar served
Finance	Launch a ₦200 billion Just-Transition Fund capitalized by 5% of federal oil royalties and concessional climate finance.	NSIA / Federal Ministry of Finance	Distributive & Restorative
Governance	Amend Petroleum Industry Act to require HCDTs to invest ≥ 30% of annual inflows in renewable-energy and remediation projects approved by CETCs.	National Assembly	Procedural
Skills & jobs	Create a Delta Green-Skills Corps; 10 000 trainees per year in solar O&M, modular LNG safety, climate-smart aquaculture.	NDE / ITF / private sector	Distributive
Land	Publish a Community Land Protocol template; FPIC becomes a license pre-condition for all REA, NDPHC and NUPRC approvals.	FM Environment + State Houses of Assembly	Recognitional & Procedural
Remediation	Activate a Climate-Fund Remediation Window; 50% of disbursements reserved for women-led clean-up SMEs.	HYPREP / NOSDRA	Restorative

Source: Author

6.5 Milestones for 2028

- Every new energy project in the Delta clears a CETC-verified FPIC audit.
- At least 15 % of federal transition spending reaches host-community entities (tracked through open-budget tags).
- Infant mortality linked to pollution falls by 50 % from 2019 levels.
- 500,000 households switch from diesel to community mini grids or solar home systems.
- Women and youth secure meaningful representation and full voting voice on all state energy boards.

7. CONCLUSION AND NATIONAL CALL TO ACTION

The success of Nigeria's net-zero journey will be judged less by gigawatts installed than by whether the riverine towns that kept the nation's lights on for six decades emerge cleaner, safer, and more prosperous.

The evidence in Sections 2–4 is unequivocal: policy intent exists, but delivery is weak with justice in its procedural, recognition, distributive, and restoration dimension being the missing link. By structural inclusion of these communities in financing, governance, and remediation as exemplified by Germany's Coal Commission, South Africa's JET-IP, Canada's worker funds, and Denmark's community-ownership model—Nigeria can convert risk into opportunity.

7.1 Eight Priority Decisions for 2025 – 2026 and the Lead Government Actors

Priority action	Primary MDAs / public bodies accountable
1. Convene a National Energy-Transition Platform with statutory host-community seats before the next ETP revision	• National Council on Climate Change Secretariat (NCCCS) in partnership with the Energy Transition Office (ETO)
2. Operationalize the Just-Transition Fund and release a first audited report within 18 months	• Federal Ministry of Finance
3. Issue a federal directive that links all flare-capture and marginal-field licenses to local-hiring and clean-up quotas	• Presidency (for Executive Order)
4. Mandate annual TJTP scorecards as annexes to the national budget*	• Federal Ministry of Budget & Economic Planning in partnership with the Budget Office of the Federation
5. Pass a Community Land-Rights Bill that codifies Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for all energy projects	• National Assembly (Senate & House of Representatives)
6. Scale the Delta Mini-Grid Accelerator to electrify 100 riverine settlements by 2028	• Rural Electrification Agency (REA) in collaboration with the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC)
7. Launch a Delta Green-Skills Corps to retrain 50,000 workers displaced by IOC divestment	• National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in collaboration with the State Skills-Acquisition Agencies
8. Expand the Polluter-Pays Framework to cover historical liabilities and fund health surveillance	• Federal Ministry of Environment, supported by National Oil Spill Detection & Response Agency (NOSDRA), Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP), Federal Ministry of Health

7.2 Final Word

A just transition cannot emerge organically from market forces or elite filled conference halls. It must be negotiated in village squares, tracked in public budgets, and felt in cleaner air, new pay-packets, and restored creeks. The roadmap is now clear; what remains is political will. If federal ministries, state governments, investors, and communities act together—guided by the justice benchmarks set out here—the Niger Delta can become a global showcase of community-owned clean power and ecological recovery. If they delay, the region risks even more fragility fuelled by a new carbon divide: green energy for urban centers, lingering poverty for the oil patch. The moment for decisive, collective action is now.

Final Remark

Final Remarks

By the Climate Justice Africa Magazine Team

As we conclude this maiden edition of Climate Justice Africa Magazine themed - “Rising with Resilience”, we are reminded that Africa is not merely a climate victim, it is a climate leader.
From the vibrant upcycling movements in Nigeria to the powerful poetry of Mozambique, from grassroots ocean literacy campaigns to frontline negotiations on the global stage, this edition captures a continent rising with resolve, creativity, and agency.

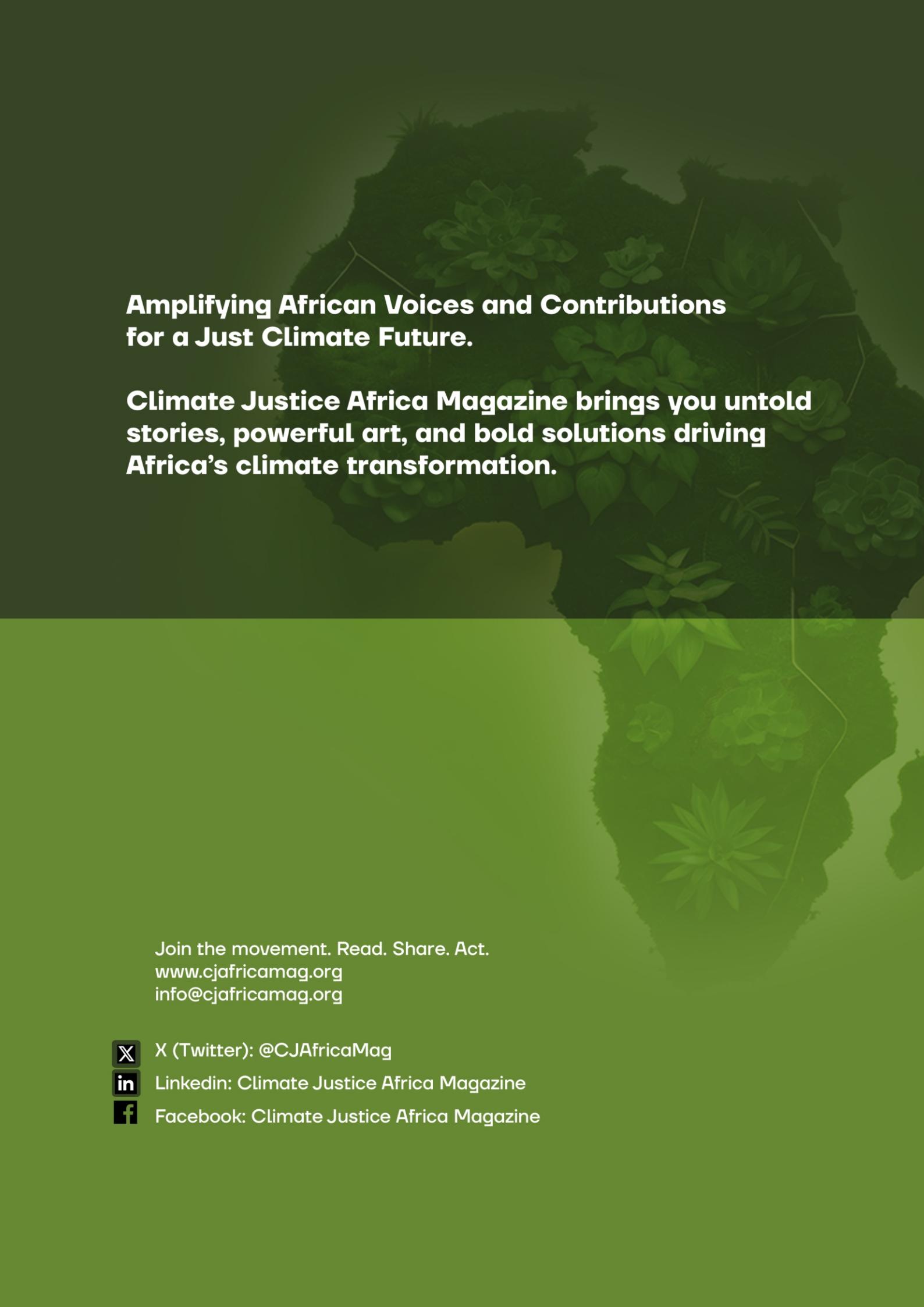
The voices you’ve encountered in these pages reflect a collective refusal to be sidelined. They echo a deeper truth: climate justice cannot be outsourced, it must be homegrown, inclusive, and intersectional. Whether addressing gender- based violence, advocating for energy justice in extractive regions, or elevating rural voices, our contributors show that the climate struggle is not only environmental, it is social, political, and cultural.

As we move forward, let this magazine be more than a publication. let it be a call to action. A platform for collaboration. A torch lighting the path to an Africa- led climate future. We invite you to engage, to challenge, to contribute and most of all, to believe that justice for our planet must begin with justice for its people.

Together, we are Climate Justice Africa Magazine.

Note

Note



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