

Driving Joint Action on Climate Adaptation: An Africa-Europe Agenda

AU-EU Policy and Action Brief

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Current geopolitical tensions are shifting national priorities, while the escalating risks and impacts of climate change, exacerbated by global inequalities, are already testing the limits of human survival and the well-being of societies. This presents a complex yet strategic opportunity for Africa and Europe to strengthen their shared goals, particularly in [climate adaptation](#). Interconnected by geographic, economic, and political realities, Africa and Europe face both mutual challenges and opportunities. The issue, therefore, is not whether cooperation is necessary, but how it can be strengthened to meet national, regional, and continental climate adaptation goals and interests. This Policy and Action Brief outlines areas of opportunity and strategic action where Africa-Europe cooperation can be strengthened to meet common climate adaptation goals, and by extension, national and continental interests.

Quick wins to steer the Africa-Europe Adaptation Partnership

Although adaptation is gaining political attention, action and financing remains fragmented and often sporadic. 2025 offers a wide window of opportunity for Africa and Europe to show clear and strategic leadership on adaptation, both within the context of the cross-continental partnership but also on the regional and global stage.

Timeline for Joint Action

- **The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4):** [Momentum](#) is building for the FfD4 International Conference ([FfD4](#)), set for June 30-July 3, 2025, in Seville, Spain. The conference, which will focus on aligning financing for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reforms to the global financial system, and improved access to finance for developing countries, can also provide global momentum for adaptation finance in the lead-up to COP 30. With just five years remaining to deliver the [SDGs, the 2024 United Nations progress assessment report](#) shows that few, if any of the SDGs are on track, and SDG13 on climate action is no exception. European and African countries should seize the platform provided by FfD4 to advocate for stronger adaptation action, particularly on concessional, grant-based, and other innovative and diverse financing to advance SDG13.
- **The 3.0 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):** Under the Paris Agreement, Parties are required to submit updated NDCs every five years. By May 22, 2025, the deadline for the 3.0 submissions, only [21 of the 195 Parties](#) had submitted their updated NDCs. To strengthen the performance of the adaptation partnership, European and African countries that have not yet submitted their NDCs should prioritize doing so with ambitious National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).
- **30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30):** Preparations are accelerating for [COP30](#), set to take place in Belém, Brazil, from November 10 to 21, 2025. The three letters issued by the COP Presidency so far signal a renewed push to turn ambitions into action. The [3rd letter](#) has a focus on the 62nd sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary in Bonn. In addition to the UAE Dialogue on implementing the Global Stock Take (GST) and the UAE Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP), the letter singles out [Global Goal on Adaptation \(GGA\) indicators under the UAE–Belém Work Programme](#) as a special area of focus. SB62 and COP30 offer a critical moment for European and African leaders to advance their adaptation partnership by agreeing that finance and action for adaptation reach equal footing with those for mitigation. In preparing for COP 30,

leaders of both continents must recognize that inaction further threatens national and global interests in the areas of social and economic development, ecosystem management, peace, and security, with increased risk of displacement, food insecurity, and resource depletion.

- **The 2nd Africa Climate Summit (ACS) and 7th AU-EU Heads of State Summit:** These upcoming milestones offer a moment for statesmanship and enhanced strategic leadership on adaptation. The AU and EU should take these Summits' opportunities to listen and develop, align, and communicate clear, coherent, and shared priorities for adaptation and resilience that underscore the strategic value of their collaborative action on adaptation.

Joint Priority Areas of Action

1. Mobilizing and steering effective adaptation finance

There is a significant gap between the finance required, pledged, and available for effective climate adaptation. According to [the UNFCCC's Fourth Biennial Assessment on climate finance flows](#), adaptation finance accounts for less than 25% of total commitments for climate action. Recognizing this gap, [COP 26](#) called on developed countries, including the EU, to double adaptation finance from 2019 levels by 2025. As the EU nears its 2025 target—and with EU institutions such as the European Commission and the European Investment Bank, along with several member states, aiming to achieve greater balance between mitigation and adaptation—now is the moment to reinforce efforts to ensure the effective delivery and sustained scaling up of adaptation finance, notably for most vulnerable countries.

Priority Areas of Focus:

- **Advocate for qualitative and quantitative adaptation financing, ensuring the delivery of financial commitments, while pushing for higher ambitions to address growing adaptation needs.** While the [EU is the largest climate finance](#) contributor to Africa through its many [ongoing initiatives](#) such as the [Team Europe Initiative \(TEI\)](#) on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in Africa, and program such as APIA (African Adaptation Project Incubator for Africa), it also bears an outsized responsibility, due to its share of historic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions compared to those of the African continent. Its presence and power in many global bodies, such as the G7/G20 and Bretton Woods institutions, can also be leveraged to advocate for countries to pay their 'fair share' of climate finance. Moreover, ahead of COP30, AU and EU leaders could jointly call for renewal of the COP 26 pledge by doubling adaptation finance from 2025 levels by 2030, to meet the rising adaptation needs – and ensuring greater parity of adaptation and mitigation.
- **Demonstrate renewed leadership in addressing structural, systemic, institutional, and access barriers to adaptation finance.** African and European countries have shown extraordinary leadership in the quest to reform the international financial architecture, particularly through the [Bridgetown Initiative](#). However, in the light of developments in the US and broader geopolitical shifts, resulting in cuts to climate and development finance, and weakening multilateral systems, concrete and urgent reforms are needed to the international financial architecture to provide African governments with the fiscal space necessary to focus on growing adaptation needs. Decentralization of global climate funds, through the establishment of regional offices and the empowerment of local and regional banking institutions, should also be urgently prioritized to ensure equitable access to and accelerate the delivery of adaptation finance.
- **Mobilize domestic resources and private sector investment to diversify adaptation finance:** While global climate finance remains crucial for facilitating climate justice, the growing uncertainty to achieve the 'Baku to Belem' Roadmap and New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance means that domestic resources combined with preventative and proactive measures such as social protection and climate insurance will offer more predictable, diverse, and sustainable pathways for climate finance. African

countries should explore ways to leverage local resources, remittances, and other innovative financing mechanisms such as green bonds, local and regional banking institutions, and private sector investments to drive sustainable and transformative adaptation action. Similarly, the EU must recognize that investing in adaptation not only ensures project bankability but also supports jobs, economic growth, and shared prosperity.

2. Enhanced joint action and implementation for on-the-ground results

High-level negotiations and policy dialogues are necessary to provide shared visions and political leadership. However, because adaptation is context-specific, it is the translation of these commitments into concrete actions on the ground that will determine the success of the AU-EU adaptation partnership.

Priority Areas of Focus:

- **Take an integrated approach to adaptation:** In a world marked by geopolitical shifts and growing inequalities, climate change and its impacts can no longer be viewed solely as an environmental or biodiversity crisis. Ensuring that adaptation action benefits local communities is crucial for equitable, just, and inclusive action. Therefore, the AU-EU partnership could usefully follow an integrated implementation approach to align with [the Global Goal on Adaptation \(GGA\)](#), which recognizes adaptation as a key driver of sustainable development. Additionally, it is imperative to align national development plans with climate adaptation objectives and to leverage platforms such as the G7, [BRICs](#), South Africa's presidency of the G20, the 2nd Africa Climate Summit, as well as regional frameworks like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to position adaptation as a priority lens through which to view development and trade policy. In the light of limited financial resources, especially in African countries, aligning adaptation goals with broader socio-economic objectives, such as social justice, health, and well-being, is crucial to generate political interest and broader societal support. Key sectors such as health, food, water, infrastructure, peace, and security offer clear entry points for broad adaptation action, with tangible benefits for both Africa and Europe. These areas also present opportunities to mobilize support and foster action at local, national, and continental levels.
- **Strengthen institutional capacity and leadership for adaptation action:** While joint vision and continental strategies are set by institutions, implementation is context-specific and in the hands of regional, national and local governments. To support these efforts, technical and financial assistance should be set aside within the implementation framework of the partnership for capacity and leadership development. Moreover, African and European leaders should invest locally, learning from best practices, to innovate and ensure the right level of delivery, agency, resources, and fiscal space to implement its adaptation plans. Furthermore, to fully realize the benefits of adaptation, communities must be empowered with knowledge and resources to build resilience and disaster preparedness.
- **Shape the Africa-Europe Partnership through inclusive engagement:** Each continent faces different starting points and very diverse adaptation challenges, opportunities, priorities and potential solutions. Structured dialogues and communication are key to understanding and dealing with this diversity. Enhanced dialogues are also instrumental in building credibility, mutual trust, shared ownership, coherence, and long-term commitment, as well as reinforcing inclusive multilateralism. Hence, practical steps to support diverse communication mechanisms and multi-stakeholder platforms outside high-level negotiations should be prioritized to strengthen implementation. These spaces are essential for inviting diverse perspectives and stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, younger generations, and indigenous communities, to co-create adaptation visions and solutions that inform Africa-Europe policy and implementation strategies. An important development to leverage is the [Marseille Declaration](#). Led by [Climate Chance](#) and

championed by non-state actors, the Declaration aims to strengthen cooperation between Africa and Europe on climate change adaptation.

- **Align cross-continental action with global climate adaptation governance:** With adoption of the [new framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation \(GGA\)](#), COP 28 marked a new milestone for adaptation. COP30 marks the end of the 2-year window of the [UAE-Belem work programme](#), launched at COP 28, to develop indicators for tracking adaptation progress with a focus on 11 targets. The AU-EU adaptation partnership should draw on these efforts to set clear targets and indicators to assess the quality, effectiveness, and outcomes of the partnership's shared adaptation objectives.

3. Enhanced collaboration, technology development and transfer, and knowledge sharing

Priority Areas of Focus:

- **Strengthen technology development and transfer:** Technology development and transfer remain critical to addressing the escalating climate risks and impacts, particularly in Africa, and hold significant potential for mutual benefits across both continents. Promising areas for broad impact and mutual benefits include early warning systems, climate information services, climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy development, and resilient urban and coastal development and planning. Cooperation in these areas can enhance the adaptive capacity of African communities, create local value, including employment opportunities, while also opening markets for European green technologies and expertise.
- **Share knowledge, experience and adaptation strategies:** Knowledge exchange is another area with potential to strengthen the adaptation partnership between Africa and Europe. As underscored in the [2021 EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#), there are decades of experience with climate adaptation measures and strategies in both African and European communities, such as transportation and infrastructure resilience measures, building supply chain resilience, preservation of biodiversity hotspots (terrestrial and marine), water collection and storage, climate information systems, digital public infrastructure, and disaster preparedness and response measures that each partner can learn from. Knowledge exchange between Africa and Europe can also help to align shared goals and ensure that strategies are fit for purpose and reflect on-ground realities.

On the road to the ACS, COP30, and the 7th AU-EU Heads of State Summit

As the world navigates the complex geopolitical tensions, competing national interests, and escalating climate impacts, a strong and strategic Africa-Europe partnership on climate adaptation at the second Africa Climate Summit (ACS), COP30 and the 7th AU-EU Heads of State Summit is more important than ever. African and European policymakers have increasingly recognized that enhanced cooperation is essential for achieving effective climate adaptation. This commitment was reiterated at the recent [EU-AU Ministerial Meeting](#) and within the [Preliminary Monitoring Report](#), where adaptation was affirmed as a central policy priority under the Africa-Europe Global Gateway Investment Package.

Overall, each of the forthcoming engagements in 2025 presents valuable opportunities to deepen the Africa-Europe partnership and align strategies on climate adaptation, where the focus must be on implementation and delivery of concrete results. Failure to deliver on existing commitments risks undermining the partnership, compromising continental priorities, and threatening global stability, climate action, peace, security, and national interests. Now is a critical moment for both continents to intensify their cooperation, particularly in the realm of climate adaptation, to protect lives, secure livelihoods, and safeguard both national and collective interests, both within the context of the adaptation partnership and on the global stage.