

OUTCOME NOTE

Africa-Europe Policymakers Meeting on Fostering Africa-Europe Climate Diplomacy and Cooperation in the New Geopolitical Era

Jointly hosted by the Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF), the Pan-African Justice Climate Alliance (PAJCA), and the African Union Commission (AUC)

24th June 2025, Bonn, Germany

Context for the Informal Africa-Europe Climate Convening

After a successful Informal Africa-Europe Climate Convening in June 2024, a second informal convening was held in Bonn on the sidelines of the UNFCCC 62nd Subsidiary Bodies (SBs), where participants reaffirmed the critical role of the Africa-Europe partnership, its leadership in driving climate action, and strategic positioning in shaping the outcomes of the forthcoming Africa Climate Summit (ACS), COP30, and the 7th AU-EU Heads of State Summit.

This year's convening took place against the backdrop of a shifting geopolitical landscape, worsening climate crisis and growing impacts, raging wars and conflicts, growing inequalities, and unprecedented rollback on ODA, as well as unpredictable climate finance from major contributor countries and largest emitters.

Co-hosted by the Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF), African Union Commission (AUC), and the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), the convening provided a unique space for African and European policymakers, negotiators, and stakeholders to debate Africa-Europe climate cooperation in a complex geopolitical context, outside of the formal negotiations.

Guided by the questions: What are the most promising pathways to build Africa-Europe alliances in the run-up to COP30 and the 7th AU-EU Summit? And what immediate actions should the two continents pursue? Participants assessed needs and priorities, explored joint approaches, divergences, and identified shared priorities in the run-up to the second Africa Climate Summit (ACS), COP30, and the 7th AU-EU Summit.

This Outcome Note summarizes key issues and action points identified during the convening.

I. EU-Africa Climate Diplomacy in a New Geopolitical World

Key issues raised

Climate diplomacy is unfolding in an increasingly contested and fragmented geopolitical context. Participants acknowledged that the current global order is marked by reduced trust, declining official development assistance (ODA), and the reconfiguration of key alliances. In this evolving landscape, the Africa-Europe partnership was recognised as a strategic lever to

demonstrate a new, principled model of cooperation—one grounded in mutual respect, solidarity, and shared objectives.

The Africa-Europe partnership remains central to achieving African, European, and global climate goals. Participants reaffirmed the importance of this partnership in delivering on the adaptation and just transition agendas. They stressed the need to develop and reinforce joint narratives and visions, while centring adaptation more deliberately in policy, planning, and cooperation frameworks—nationally, regionally, and globally.

There is growing consensus on the need for structured, informal spaces for climate dialogue between Africa and Europe. Discussions pointed to the urgency of creating regular Africa-Europe exchanges outside formal UNFCCC negotiations—spaces where differences can be addressed candidly, priorities aligned, gaps identified, and practical solutions co-developed. Such spaces would support strategic coordination ahead of key milestones, including the second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2), COP30, and the 7th AU-EU Summit.

Effective adaptation implementation faces complex and multifaceted barriers, particularly in Africa. Participants highlighted persistent constraints including limited finance, fragmented governance, weak institutional capacity, technical gaps, and competing development priorities. These challenges must be addressed through targeted, context-responsive support that strengthens national and local systems and enables long-term climate resilience.

Bridging the gap between global ambition and local delivery is both urgent and achievable. There was broad recognition that the success of global adaptation frameworks hinges on political leadership, increased and predictable funding, and tailored support for foundational systems—such as institutions, technologies, and local capacity. Participants called for adaptation finance to reach local communities and support inclusive, proven, community-led solutions. In this light, the two-year UAE–Belém work programme, launched at COP28 to develop indicators for adaptation progress, was seen as a critical opportunity to align tracking and investment with real-world needs and just outcomes.

Action points

- **Establishment of a regular Africa-Europe informal dialogue track** to complement formal UNFCCC negotiations, where differences can be discussed candidly, gaps can be identified, and solutions co-developed, to ensure alignment, address political gaps, and build trust—bridging divergent priorities.
- **Develop and promote a shared Africa-Europe climate narrative and joint Africa-EU adaptation strategies** that integrate community-led solutions, aligning with key national and continental agendas such as Agenda 2063 and the EU Green Deal.
- **Strengthen strategic and joint leadership** to champion cross-continental cooperation at COP30, the 7th AU-EU Summit, and the second Africa Climate Summit.
- **Strengthen national and subnational adaptation foundational systems** through targeted institutional capacity building, knowledge exchange, skills development, fit-for-purpose technological development and transfer, and inclusive governance.

- **Promote transparency and equitable participation** to build trust and avoid deepening regional imbalances and inequalities, including through **technical exchanges, knowledge transfer, and diplomatic cooperation** across key platforms such as COP30, the 7th AU-EU Summit, the second Africa Climate Summit and the associated Africa Climate Week.

II. Climate Finance and the Baku to Belem Roadmap: Navigating a New Era of Reduced ODA and Financial Constraints

Key issues raised

Africa's climate finance needs are urgent, vast, and remain critically underfunded. Despite commitments to scale climate finance to \$300 billion annually by 2035 and double adaptation funding by 2025 compared to 2019, Africa's estimated need of \$1.6 to \$1.9 trillion by 2030—especially for adaptation—remains unmet. Participants emphasised that African countries, which contribute the least to global emissions, are disproportionately bearing the cost of adaptation, demanding a fairer, more inclusive global financing response.

There is a deep mismatch between political commitments and the realities of delivery on the ground. Participants raised concerns about the persistent gap between climate finance pledges and actual disbursements. While frameworks like the Baku to Belem Roadmap signal ambition, participants noted that rigid funding structures, complex access modalities, and slow delivery timelines hinder the ability of African governments and local actors to scale timely, impactful adaptation responses.

Africa's growing debt crisis is shrinking fiscal space for adaptation and undermining resilience efforts. With African external debt exceeding \$769 billion, countries are caught in a vicious cycle—borrowing to address worsening climate impacts, while that very debt limits long-term investment in resilience. This debt overhang undermines sustainable development, diverts funds from critical services like health and education, and reduces the effectiveness of climate finance already on the table.

Africa's exclusion from global climate finance governance limits ownership and impact. Participants underscored the structural imbalance in current climate finance architecture, noting that no major climate finance fund is hosted in Africa. This lack of institutional presence contributes to diminished African influence over how finance flows are structured, governed, and accessed—further compounding challenges in meeting local adaptation needs.

Action points

- **Champion joint Africa-Europe advocacy for global financial reform.** Collaborate to reform global financial systems, alleviate Africa's debt overhang, and free up fiscal space for climate action. Leverage Africa's G20 seat, EU influence, and lessons from Europe's debt crisis to bring high-ambition, AU-EU-backed proposals beyond the UNFCCC process to global platforms.

- **Mobilize ambitious, predictable, and locally-driven adaptation finance.** Jointly advocate for need-based and impact-driven adaptation finance aligned with local realities, national adaptation plans (NAPs), Agenda 2063, and the EU Green Deal. Drive coordinated AU-EU financing ambitions at COP30, the 7th AU-EU Summit, and the second Africa Climate Summit. Promote scalable models like Kenya's devolved climate finance system to enable community access and local implementation.
- **Scale innovative and inclusive financing approaches.** Promote the use of blended finance, just risk-sharing models (e.g. guarantees), and private capital to bridge the adaptation finance gap. Prioritize investments in climate-resilient infrastructure, locally owned value chains, and inclusive development models that deliver co-benefits for communities and ecosystems.
- **Clarify and tailor CBAM and carbon pricing to strengthen Africa–Europe trust and cooperation.** Enhance communication and capacity-building on the EU CBAM to address misunderstandings, ensure transparency, and support preparedness in Africa ahead of its 2026 entry into force. Prioritize joint efforts to improve African access to carbon markets and ensure fair pricing that reflects the full value of Africa's natural capital. Promote equitable market design and benefit-sharing to rebuild trust and foster inclusive climate partnerships.
- **Strengthen institutions, trust, and readiness for climate finance delivery.** Invest in foundational and accelerator infrastructure—governance systems, digital infrastructure, public institutions—to improve climate finance absorption and deployment. Expand transparency, local participation, and the localization of funds. Support research, risk communication, and awareness to shift perceptions and attract diverse sources of finance.

III. Mainstreaming Adaptation Action and Finance in Preparation for COP30 and the 7th AU-EU Heads of State Summit

Adaptation is a survival priority for Africa and must be elevated as a core economic and development imperative. Africa faces the highest climate vulnerability globally, with 17 of the 20 most climate-vulnerable countries located on the continent, despite contributing less than 4% of global emissions. Participants reaffirmed that adaptation remains the top priority for African nations, yet it continues to be treated primarily as an environmental issue. They called for urgent recognition of adaptation as a cross-cutting development, economic, and social priority that must be fully integrated into national development planning, budgeting, and investment frameworks.

National adaptation frameworks remain underdeveloped, limiting effective access to and use of climate finance. Participants highlighted the widespread challenges of incomplete, underfunded, and aspirational National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). These frameworks often fail to provide clear, actionable roadmaps for implementation, reducing their usefulness in guiding investment and coordination. This hampers the ability of African countries to attract and deploy finance where it is most needed.

Decentralised, user-friendly climate finance is essential to drive locally meaningful adaptation action. There was a strong call to move away from distant and centralised funding models, toward devolved, context-responsive mechanisms that channel finance to the local level. Participants emphasized the need to simplify and harmonize access procedures across climate

funds, improve transparency and visibility of African progress, and create space for local institutions and communities—along with private sector actors—to participate meaningfully in adaptation action and finance governance.

Aligning climate and development planning is critical to scaling adaptation impact and ensuring systemic resilience. Participants advocated for a “kitchen sink” approach—marshalling all available financial and policy tools to address adaptation. This includes aligning adaptation priorities with economic development planning, such as expanding clean energy access, just transition pathways, and clean cooking initiatives. Such integrated approaches offer co-benefits across health, gender, livelihoods, and economic productivity, especially in vulnerable communities.

Localized and regionalized finance models must reflect Africa’s realities and be driven by African priorities. There was strong consensus on the need to align national and regional adaptation efforts with tailored financial tools that respond to Africa’s diverse contexts. This includes designing financing mechanisms that reflect national development plans, regional frameworks such as Agenda 2063, and initiatives like the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy. The localization of finance also entails empowering African financial institutions and communities to shape, manage, and track adaptation investments in real-time.

Action points

- **Elevate adaptation as a political and financial priority at all levels.** Embed adaptation at the core of national, regional, and global climate agendas with clear political commitments and ambitious finance targets, supported by delivery roadmaps through 2030 and beyond.
- **Mobilize AU–EU leadership to close the adaptation finance gap.** Use COP30 as a critical moment for Africa and Europe to show joint leadership by setting new climate adaptation finance targets and unlocking multilateral and bilateral funding streams.
- **Deploy a comprehensive “kitchen-sink” approach to financing adaptation.** Leverage all available financial instruments—including public funds like pension assets and catalytic development finance—to scale adaptation, while integrating complementary actions such as clean energy access, cooking solutions, and national energy compacts (e.g., Mission 300).
- **Integrate economic and climate planning through whole-of-government approaches.** Involve ministries of finance, planning, and other key sectors in adaptation strategies to align public spending with climate goals, improve policy coherence, and ensure national ownership of long-term resilience strategies.
- **Scale ambition and visibility through shared narratives and proven models.** Develop joint AU-EU narratives on adaptation that reflect local and regional priorities, raise awareness of successful initiatives (e.g. African Centre of Excellence on Adaptation in Egypt), and send strong signals to unlock political will and investment.

A focus on CBAM and pricing of carbon credits

Clarifying CBAM and strengthening trust in carbon-related policies through transparency and cooperation. Participants expressed concern that current EU climate policy tools—particularly the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)—risk reinforcing global imbalances and eroding trust, largely due to a lack of clear understanding and communication among African partners. Many noted that there remains confusion about the **scope and operation of CBAM**, including the fact that it does **not target African governments**, but rather **companies exporting carbon-intensive goods** to the EU.

It was stressed that **CBAM applies to a limited number of sectors**, such as iron and steel, cement, aluminium, hydrogen, and fertilizers. Moreover, **over 99% of producers in these sectors will likely be exempted** from compliance obligations, with the regulation **only impacting the largest, most carbon-intensive exporters**. Nonetheless, with **CBAM's enforcement set to begin in January 2026**, participants emphasized the urgency of joint efforts to **enhance clarity, build institutional capacity**, and ensure that African exporters are adequately prepared.

In parallel, participants raised strong concerns about the undervaluation of carbon credits originating from Africa, pointing to a significant price disparity compared to other regions. Despite Africa's rich and unique natural capital—including vast forests, wetlands, and blue carbon ecosystems—carbon credits from the continent often fetch far lower prices due to perceived risks, market design, and weak negotiating power.

This price imbalance was seen as symptomatic of deeper structural issues in global carbon markets. Participants called for **greater Africa–Europe cooperation to ensure that carbon credits' pricing mechanisms reflect the full environmental, social, and economic value of African ecosystems**, and that future market design supports fair and equitable benefit sharing. Rebuilding trust and fostering mutual understanding—particularly around tools like CBAM and carbon credits pricing—was seen as essential for creating a more just, inclusive, and effective Africa–Europe climate partnership.

Conclusion and outlook

This informal Africa-Europe climate convening reaffirmed the importance of sustained, equitable cooperation in addressing shared climate challenges. With geopolitical uncertainty growing and the international climate finance system under strain, the need for renewed partnership, mutual trust, and co-leadership was underscored.

The Africa-Europe partnership was framed not only as one of mutual interest but also of common destiny in confronting the climate crisis, while the informal convening was lauded as a key platform for trust-building and alignment of strategies leading into COP30 and the 7th AU-EU Summit.

Participants included

- **Antony Nyong**, Director, Green Growth and Climate Change, African Development Bank (AfDB)
- **Arthy Hartwell**, Policy Lead for Climate and Health, Wellcome Trust
- **Augustine Njamnshi**, Co-founder and Chair of Technical and Political Affairs, Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA); and Executive Director, African Coalition for Sustainable Energy & Access (ACSEA)
- **Caroline Tagwireyi**, Senior Mitigation Officer, Climate Change, African Union Commission (AUC) (on behalf of Director Nyambe)
- **Charles Mwangi**, Head of Programs, Chair of the Board, Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA)
- **Cromwel Lukorito**, Vice-Chair of Working Group II, Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- **Dimitrios Zevgolis**, Head of Multilateral Affairs Unit at the European Commission Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA)
- **Fionnuala Callanan**, Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs, Head of Delegation to the UNFCCC
- **Gerhard Schlaudraff**, German Federal Foreign Office, Director for Climate Diplomacy
- **Grace Mbungu**, Africa-Europe Foundation, Senior Fellow for Adaptation
- **Jacob Werksman**, Principal Adviser for International Aspects of EU Climate Policy, European Commission Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA)
- **James Murombedzi**, UNECA, Chief of Section Climate Change
- **Jette Michelsen**, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Climate Negotiator and Chief Advisor, Dept. of Green Diplomacy and Climate
- **Jori Keijsper**, Dutch Ministry of Climate Policy and Green Growth, Head of Delegation to the UNFCCC
- **Lola Vallejo**, European Climate Foundation, Director, Diplomacy Programme
- **Maria Samuelsen**, Danish Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities, Head of Delegation to the UNFCCC
- **Mattias Frumerie**, Swedish Ministry of Climate and Enterprise, Climate Ambassador (Climate Envoy)
- **Mattias Söderberg**, DanChurchAid, Global Climate Lead
- **Medhin Fisseha**, Government of Ethiopia, Environment and Climate Change, Ministry of Planning and Development
- **Poorva Karkare**, ECDPM, Senior Policy Analyst
- **Richard Muyungi**, African Group of Negotiators (AGN) Chair, AGN
- **Seidu Issifu**, Government of Ghana, Minister of State for Climate Change
- **Raphaël Danglade**, Africa-Europe Foundation, Lead Portfolio Manager – Climate & Development