



TOWARDS AN AFRICAN JUST RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

A REPORT BY THE
CLIMATE JUSTICE IMPACT FUND FOR AFRICA (CJIFA)

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FOREWORD

BY H.E. DR. JOYCE BANDA, CJIFA BOARD

The African continent stands at a critical crossroads. We are home to some of the world's most vibrant cultures, youngest populations, and richest natural resources. Yet, we also remain among the most vulnerable to the compounding shocks of climate change—disproportionately impacted despite contributing the least to the crisis. Droughts, shifting seasons, disappearing rivers, floods, food insecurity, and forced migration have become part of our people's daily struggles, particularly for women, youth, Indigenous communities, and those living in poverty.

The urgency of the moment requires us to move beyond narrow definitions of resilience. It is not enough for our communities to simply “bounce back” after disasters. We must instead “bounce forward”—toward systems that are more equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and just.

The **Africa Just Resilience Framework (AJRF)**, spearheaded by the Climate Justice Innovation Fund for Africa (CJIFA) in collaboration with PACJA and Pro(to)topia, emerges as a timely and transformative response. It gives language and structure to the aspirations that many of us have long held: that resilience must be rooted in justice, that climate responses must honour local knowledge, and that adaptation efforts must redress—rather than reinforce—historic inequalities.

As Chair of the CJIFA Board, I am proud to stand with the communities, thinkers, and partners who have co-created this visionary document. This Framework provides policymakers, funders, and practitioners with a compass—grounded in Africa's lived realities—to guide investment, policy reform, and collective action. It centers the experiences of those too often excluded from high-level processes and insists that care, equity, and intergenerational responsibility must define how we respond to climate threats.

This is not just a policy document. It is a call to courage. It invites all of us—governments, civil society, donors, and private sector actors—to disrupt business-as-usual and commit to building futures that leave no one behind.

I commend the team behind this work and encourage every reader to engage deeply with its principles. Together, we can ensure that Africa leads not only in climate ambition, but in demonstrating what a just, caring, and community-rooted response to the climate emergency truly looks like.

H.E. Dr. Joyce Banda

Former President of the Republic of Malawi

Chair, CJIFA Board

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This framework is spearheaded by PACJA (the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance), sponsored and convened by CJIFA (the Climate Justice Impact Fund for Africa), in partnership with Pro(to)topia. The framework will be disseminated as a contribution to the second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2) scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on September 8 – 10, 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Africa is facing the stark realities of climate change while fighting to shift the colonial legacy of profound injustice. Despite contributing the least to global emissions, the continent is disproportionately impacted, grappling daily with droughts, floods, food insecurity, and forced migration that severely affect women, youth, Indigenous communities, and those living in poverty. African nations are the most vulnerable globally, with 16 of the lowest-scoring 20 countries in the 2023 Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) Country Index being African. The continent is already losing 2–5% of its GDP annually and diverting up to 9% of national budgets to address climate extremes. This crisis is compounded by a striking climate finance hypocrisy, where rich countries spent six times more on fossil fuel subsidies at home than on international climate finance for vulnerable nations between 2010 and 2022. Since the inaugural Africa Climate Summit (ACS1) in 2023, these challenges have worsened, with increasing vulnerability, decreasing capacity to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, a deepening crisis of conflict and governance, inadequate climate finance, and a heavy debt burden. Current resilience approaches often fall short, leading to 'resilience-washing' that masks systemic issues and shifts the burden onto frontline communities.

The **African Just Resilience Framework**, spearheaded by the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) and the Climate Justice Impact Fund for Africa (CJIFA) in partnership with Pro(to)topia, offers a timely and transformative response. It moves beyond merely "bouncing back" from disasters to "bouncing forward"—towards systems that are more equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and just. This Framework provides a compass grounded in Africa's lived realities to guide investment, policy reform, and collective action, insisting that care, equity, and intergenerational responsibility define climate responses.

Just Resilience is defined as **Africa's journey to transform in the face of climate change, ensuring that those most vulnerable are not only protected, but empowered to build a more equitable, just, and sustainable future for all.** It is about building resilience in a fair, inclusive, and transformative manner, actively improving the system's ability to handle future threats by addressing the root causes of vulnerability and transforming systems that perpetuated it, while acknowledging historical responsibility and power imbalances. **"True resilience is inherently just: an unequal or unjust society cannot truly be resilient".**

Implementing climate justice and adaptation in Africa necessitates a strong emphasis on African sovereignty and self-reliance. Solutions must be African-driven and African-led, reducing over-

reliance on external funding and priorities. Africa must take control of shaping its future in global negotiations, positioning itself as an "enabler of the transition" rather than solely a victim of climate impacts. This includes mobilising domestic resources for climate action, even as the principle of historical responsibility for emissions from developed nations remains crucial.

To achieve this vision, the Framework promotes policy and practice recommendations, including:

1. Embed "just resilience" as a core principle across all climate action, ensuring fairness, inclusivity, and transformative outcomes. For example, this could be implemented by developing a "just resilience" policy framework through a highly consultative process with civil society and vulnerable groups. This ensures that all dimensions of justice are integrated from the foundational stage, guaranteeing that solutions align with the actual needs of people.

2. Reform International Financial Institutions (IFIs). This involves advocating for reforms such as the International Monetary Fund's Special Drawing Rights reallocation to enable more accessible lending for adaptation and resilience, and Loss and Damage initiatives, and adjusting growth models to emphasise debt reduction for low- and middle-income countries. A just reform requires advocating for decision-making changes at IFIs to include representatives from low-income countries on the boards that determine lending criteria. This gives low-income countries a crucial voice in the financial systems that impact them, addressing the high cost of capital and recurring debt burdens that constrain African nations' ability to invest in climate action.

3. Decolonise climate response by valuing African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK). Climate education and research should honour indigenous methodologies, worldviews, and practices to disrupt colonial legacies and enhance resilience and sustainability. Policies should mandate the co-design of climate education and research with Indigenous leaders and knowledge holders. This actively disrupts colonial legacies that have historically marginalised their perspectives and re-centres their invaluable insights for climate preparedness and adaptation.

4. Accelerate deployment of renewable energy. The goal is to provide access to affordable and reliable energy to the approximately 600 million people in Africa who still lack electricity, allowing the continent to "leapfrog" the fossil fuel era and pursue a low-carbon development path. A just energy transition requires formal roles for all stakeholders, including local communities and indigenous groups, in both the planning and execution of energy projects. Renewable energy development must avoid forced displacement and land dispossession, prioritising the rights and livelihoods of local communities. Decentralised renewable energy solutions, such as solar microgrids, tailored to the specific needs of rural and semi-urban populations, should be prioritised.

5. Prioritise locally-led climate information systems by ensuring climate data is accurate, actionable, and shared transparently as a public good, empowering local "data brokers".

This involves training and resourcing local "data brokers" to translate complex climate data into actionable insights for their communities, ensuring this information is transparently and equitably shared. This ensures vital information is accessible to all, including marginalised groups, through formats like local languages, mobile messages, and community radio.

Building Just Resilience in Africa requires a fundamental shift in mindset, one that embraces transformation and recognises the deep links between climate, social, and political systems. By prioritising the most vulnerable, valuing indigenous knowledge, and ensuring that communities are not just beneficiaries but rightsholders, Africa can forge a path forward that is not only resilient but also more equitable, prosperous, and sustainable for all its citizens.

INTRODUCTION

The African continent is disproportionately impacted by climate change despite contributing the least to global emissions. Centuries of resource exploitation and structural injustice have left the most vulnerable communities bearing the heaviest burdens¹. This is compounded by a striking climate finance hypocrisy: between 2010 and 2022, rich countries spent six times more on fossil fuel subsidies at home than they committed in international climate finance to support climate-vulnerable countries, an amount which could cover nearly half the gap in international public finance needed for developing economies².

"Climate change must be addressed from an intersectional perspective, so that everybody owns climate change" **Carole Osero-Ageng'o**³

This framework is not intended to add bureaucracy with a new standalone, rigid document, but rather to promote Just Resilience as a "connector" between existing development actions and international frameworks such as the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework.

"It's important to make Just Resilience a bridge between all the development actions." **Kossivi Adessou**

The African Just Resilience Framework aims to support policymakers and practitioners in transforming abstract ethical principles into actionable strategies for the design and implementation of existing frameworks and practices, ensuring they become truly fair, inclusive, and transformative for Africa.

BACKGROUND

Africa faces immense adverse impacts of climate change, with countries already losing 2–5% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and diverting up to 9% of their budgets to respond to climate extremes⁴. The continent is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, despite contributing minimally to global carbon emissions (less than 4%). A significant portion of the workforce (55–62% in sub-Saharan Africa) is employed in climate-exposed sectors like agriculture, which is predominantly rainfed, making livelihoods highly susceptible to erratic weather patterns, droughts, and floods⁵. Poor and female-headed households in rural Africa face even greater livelihood risks⁶.

Africa has not received adequate climate finance, making it harder for the continent to address its adaptation needs. In sub-Saharan Africa, annual climate adaptation costs are estimated to range from US\$30 to US\$50 billion over the next decade, representing approximately 2%–3% of the region's GDP⁷. Currently, the amount provided by existing climate finance instruments is minimal, and significant improvement appears unlikely, particularly in light of ongoing challenges related to the New Collective Finance Goal negotiations.

Current resilience approaches often fall short, leading to "resilience-washing" that masks systemic issues and shifts the burden onto frontline communities⁸. Just Resilience is not just about helping communities "cope better," but about empowering them to shape their own future and address the underlying systems that produced vulnerability in the first place.

"Just resilience is not simply a technical fix, but a pathway to transforming those systems that produced vulnerability in the first place".⁹ Jessica Hitt



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METHOD

This report synthesizes insights on the concept of "Just Resilience" in the African context, drawing on expert interviews, a literature review, and consultations with policy experts from the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA). It outlines the urgent need for a framework, guiding principles, and both policy and practice recommendations for catalyzing change.

Definition of Just Resilience

"There's a lot of interest in including justice and equity in adaptation. But I think that there isn't always the best guidance on what that means".¹⁰ Jessica Hitt

Just Resilience is Africa's journey to transform in the face of climate change, ensuring that those most vulnerable are not only protected, but empowered to build a more equitable, just, and sustainable future for all.

In the context of climate action, resilience is the capacity of social, economic, and ecological systems to cope with a hazardous event or trend, responding or reorganizing in ways that maintain their essential function, identity, and structure¹¹.

In this report, Just Resilience refers to building resilience in a fair, inclusive, and transformative manner, integrating the needs of vulnerable communities¹². The concept moves beyond simply withstanding a shock to actively improving the system's ability to handle future threats by addressing the root causes of vulnerability¹³, and aiming to transform systems that perpetuated vulnerability while acknowledging historical responsibility and power imbalances¹⁴.

"For the pursuit of just resilience to be effective, then we must look at the underlying, foundational issues. And the foundational issues play around issues of power, people and politics".¹⁵ Carole Osero-Ageng'o

In the African context, this means addressing the deep-seated issues of power, people, and politics that drive climate change, ensuring that no one is left behind in adaptation efforts, particularly those disproportionately affected such as women, disabled people, low-income groups, and informal workers¹⁶.

Initiatives including the Climate Justice Impact Fund for Africa (CJIFA) embody this by funding "unfundables"—grassroots groups facing conventional funding challenges due to informality or disruptive nature, thereby supporting locally-led, evidence-based advocacy and empowering those with direct insights into community solutions¹⁷.

The Africa Just Resilience Framework mirrors CJIFA's integrated grantmaking approach that prioritises accessibility, trust-based partnerships, and capacity as a right. This reinforces the notion that resilience-building must dismantle barriers to resources, rather than replicate rigid donor-driven models.

Ensuring no-one is left behind: intercountry, intracountry and intergenerational equity

In common with the Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to leave no one behind, the African Just Resilience Framework prioritizes those furthest behind¹⁸. *“Putting those furthest behind first must be the just ambition of a resilient Africa”*. In the context of climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience, this requires a specific definition of who these groups are. **At the continental level**, this includes countries with the lowest adaptive capacity and highest climate vulnerability, as identified by indices such as the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) Country Index (Chen et al., 2015)¹⁹. **Domestically**, this principle applies to people within a country who live in climate hotspots, are disproportionately affected by climate change due to multidimensional inequalities (e.g., gender, class, disability), and are often entangled in conflict²⁰. **Intergenerationally**, justice must focus on Africa's youth bulge, while not losing sight of the fact that the number of older people, will also significantly increase in Africa between now and 2050. The capacity of Africa's young people to secure livelihoods through green jobs and industrialization is a key element of justice, as their economic stability will be crucial for supporting older generations and ensuring sustainable development.²¹ If provided with the right enabling environment, youth and older people in Africa and across Low and Middle Income Countries, can become a powerful force for adaptation and resilience on the continent.

CJIFA's philosophy reinforces this by embedding accountability downwards to communities and ensuring that local voices, particularly women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples, drive decision-making.

The term Just Resilience echoes CJIFA's recognition that true adaptation and resilience do not emerge from external prescriptions, but from locally grounded leadership, indigenous knowledge, and community-driven systems of care.



Hekgama Agricultural Learning Centre

STRUCTURE

This report's analysis and recommendations are structured around the three main themes of the 2nd Africa Climate Summit: Adaptation and Resilience, Climate Finance, and Nature and Tech Solutions. This structure ensures the framework aligns with the current and future priorities of African leaders, policymakers, and civil society, offering a relevant and actionable guide for continental and global climate governance.

The second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2) will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 8-10 September 2025. The three-day agenda is grouped according to the key themes of solutions, adaptation and resilience, and climate finance.²²

JUST RESILIENCE AND THE AFRICA CLIMATE SUMMIT

At the inaugural Africa Climate Summit (ACS1), co-hosted by the African Union and the Government of Kenya in September 2023, 30,000 delegates addressed global climate challenges under the theme *Driving Green Growth and Climate Finance Solutions for Africa and the World*. The summit culminated in the **Nairobi Declaration**, a call to action reflecting African States' position on climate action²³.

ACS1 highlighted many of the critical problems related to climate action in Africa, especially the issue of insufficient and unfairly distributed climate finance²⁴, and the failure of developed countries to meet their commitment (made in 2009 at COP15 in Copenhagen) of providing USD\$100 billion annually in climate financing by 2023²⁵.

The summit called attention to justice as critical for climate action, stressing the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, which necessitates massive greenhouse gas reductions from high-emission countries and transparency in a just and equitable transition²⁶.



Climate Smart Village

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Adaptation and Resilience

The summit called for the benefits of climate action to be shared equitably so that "no one is left behind"²⁷; the lack of participation by local communities, women and youth in the planning and implementation phases of adaptation measures was highlighted, noting that integrating vulnerable populations is crucial to ensure adaptation measures address existing inequalities exacerbated by climate change²⁸.

Resilience was high on the agenda, due to Africa's extensive vulnerability to climate impacts despite being a low emitter²⁹. ACS1 recommended action on resilience including better integration of disaster risk reduction into adaptation plans, as well as improved monitoring and evaluation systems³⁰.

Climate Finance

Urgent progress on the Loss and Damage Fund was highlighted as crucial for climate justice, in order for industrialised nations to take responsibility for their historical emissions and provide support to the most vulnerable countries³¹. There were calls for a global carbon tax on fossil fuel trade, maritime transport, and aviation to help finance climate action and the Loss and Damage Fund³².

*"It's important to recognize that loss and damage is the expression of the failure of humanity to deal with climate change impacts".³³ **Kossivi Adessou***

The high cost of capital and recurring debt burdens were criticised for constraining African nations' ability to invest in climate action and development³⁴, with African countries often paying up to eight times more for borrowing from multilateral development banks compared to some developed nations³⁵, and the injustice of developing countries, despite contributing least to climate change, facing a disproportionate burden and unconscionable financing costs³⁶.

Nature and Tech Solutions to Climate Change

The Nairobi Declaration recognised the crucial role of nature and biodiversity in climate solutions and resilience, committing to actions against biodiversity loss and deforestation, and restoration of degraded lands³⁷.

Resilience initiatives included accelerating Africa's green economic transformation, with an increase of Africa's renewable energy capacity to 300 GW by 2030, and developing in-continent processing of Africa's critical raw materials³⁸.

What has changed since ACS1 in 2023?

While there have been some international developments, such as a new climate finance goal, the underlying challenges for Africa—especially increasing vulnerability, decreasing capacity, and a heavy debt burden—have worsened since ACS1 in 2023.

Adaptation and resilience

According to the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative Country Index, African nations as a group are the most vulnerable and least ready to adapt to climate change³⁹. This has been the case for many years and continues to be the overall trend: out of the world's top 10 most vulnerable countries worldwide, eight are in Africa⁴⁰. The insurance protection gap remains vast, with coverage often below 1%, leaving most losses uninsured⁴¹.

Rank	Country	African Nation?	Score
187	Chad	Yes	25.0
186	Central African Rep.	Yes	26.9
185	Eritrea	Yes	29.5
184	Sudan	Yes	30.2
183	Guinea-Bissau	Yes	31.0
182	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	Yes	32.7
180	Congo	Yes	32.8
180	Afghanistan	No	32.8
178	Bangladesh	No	32.9
178	Burundi	Yes	32.9
177	Madagascar	Yes	33.0
176	Haiti	No	33.2
175	Sierra Leone	Yes	33.8
174	Zimbabwe	Yes	34.0
173	Yemen	No	34.2
172	Uganda	Yes	34.4
171	Niger	Yes	34.6
169	Malawi	Yes	34.8
169	Mali	Yes	34.8
168	Liberia	Yes	35.0

Table 1: Of the lowest scoring 20 countries in the 2023 Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) Country Index, 16 are African countries. The data for this table is based on the 2023 ND-GAIN Country Index rankings⁴².

Africa is falling further behind in terms of SDGs: only 6% of the 32 measurable SDG targets are on track to be achieved by 2030, 21 targets still need significant progress, and 8 targets are trending in the wrong direction⁴³.

Africa faces a deepening crisis of worsening conflicts and governance, driving a record number of displaced people across the continent. In 2024 the conflict in Sudan became the world's largest displacement crisis, with 14.3 million people forcibly displaced⁴⁴. Surges in violence are often fueled by weak and distrusted governance, where states fail to provide security and basic services, leading to a rise in insurgencies and military coups, as countries like Niger and Mali⁴⁵. As

a result, the number of forcibly displaced people in Africa has grown to over 45 million⁴⁶.

This instability means that the limited resources available for climate adaptation are diverted to urgent humanitarian needs, while the destruction of infrastructure and the breakdown of institutions make it nearly impossible to implement long-term resilience projects⁴⁷.

*"The issue of just resilience is a very, very complex issue that must be addressed from a complex perspective."*⁴⁸ **Carole Osero-Ageng'o**

Climate finance

At COP29 in Baku a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance was agreed, targeting USD 1.3 trillion annually by 2035, with USD 300 billion specifically allocated for developing countries⁴⁹. But concerns remain about the implementation of these financial commitments, including the withdrawal of the USA from the Paris Agreement and financial pledges to the Green Climate Fund and Loss and Damage Fund⁵⁰.

"In European discourse, climate action is increasingly framed as a security measure – in other words, climate change is seen as a security threat. While this framing is valid, it often comes at the expense of 'climate justice' principles. From the African side, particularly among civil society, there is a strong push for building just resilience. Yet the European response has not met these demands, creating an ever growing misalignment on the climate agenda". **Hanne Knaepen**

In this environment of reduced international cooperation and leadership for climate justice⁵¹, private finance is increasingly presented as an important solution to close the adaptation finance gap: climate change represents a \$3 trillion investment opportunity in Africa according to the African Development Bank, and a new platform to grow private investment in African adaptation has secured commitments⁵².

Africa has not received adequate climate finance, making it harder for the continent to address its adaptation needs. In sub-Saharan Africa, annual climate adaptation costs are estimated to range from US\$30 billion to US\$50 billion over the next decade, representing approximately 2%–3% of the region's GDP. Currently, the amount provided by existing climate finance instruments is minimal, and significant improvement appears unlikely, particularly in light of ongoing challenges related to the New Collective Finance Goal negotiations.

African countries are expected to spend approximately \$74 billion on debt servicing as of 2024⁵³. As of February 2025, nine African countries were in debt distress and 11 were at high risk⁵⁴. The average fiscal deficit for the African continent has been a growing concern, with the average fiscal deficit for the continent increasing from an estimated 4.9% of GDP in 2022 to 5.0% of GDP in 2023⁵⁵.

Africa's debt service burden is forecasted to decline slightly to 12.6% in 2025, meaning that for every \$100 spent by African governments, over \$12 goes into servicing debt, leaving much less for critical sectors like healthcare, climate, education, and infrastructure⁵⁶.

Nature and technical solutions to climate change

The UN's 2024 Adaptation Gap report notes that private capital accounts for only 1.6% of adaptation financing and is not always well-suited for public good projects such as early warning systems or ecosystem protection, which lack "bankable" revenue streams⁵⁷.

The UN has also analysed adaptation finance instruments and found that they are not gender-neutral and they may contain gender biases that can perpetuate inequalities; targeted action is recommended to take account of gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) when financing adaptation.⁵⁸

TEN GUIDING PRINCIPLES TOWARDS AN AFRICAN JUST RESILIENCE

FRAMEWORK

An African Just Resilience Framework must be founded on climate justice and directly respond to the needs and aspirations of people and communities in Africa⁵⁹. It seeks to redefine resilience beyond simply "bouncing back" to a potentially unjust status quo, instead aiming for transformative change that addresses underlying vulnerabilities and power imbalances⁶⁰.

1. Centre justice and equity

Just resilience is fundamentally about the fair distribution of burdens and benefits of building climate resilience, ensuring that vulnerable communities do not bear the negative consequences of resilience efforts⁶¹. It requires providing solutions that align with the real needs of people, not just generic fixes. As Kossivi Adessou states, "solutions must align with the needs. For example, water: one pump provided to 4000 people might be a 'solution' but it is not a fair solution"⁶². This approach actively addresses power imbalances and historical responsibilities, embedding equity into the design and implementation of initiatives⁶³.

"We should not just be focusing on the resilience of systems, but resilience that is equitably distributed among the people. Our advocacy is based on people centred approaches to solving the climate crisis. The primary beneficiaries should be people especially those most affected, frontline communities, women, children – and then other systems can build on that. We should not build a resilient system first and then people have to just cope with that." **Eugene Nforngwa**⁶⁴

CJIFA's philosophy reinforces this by embedding accountability downwards to communities and ensuring that local voices, particularly women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples, drive decision-making.

2. Foster African sovereignty and self-reliance

Solutions must be African-driven and African-led, reducing over-reliance on external funding and priorities⁶⁵. This means Africa needs to "take control of shaping its future" in global negotiations, rather than simply responding to external forces. There is a need to "change the narrative, to show that Africa is actually an enabler of the transition" by leveraging its critical minerals and natural resources, and positioning itself as a strategic partner rather than only a victim of climate impacts⁶⁶. Eugene Nforngwa emphasizes that to "build resilient and just resilient societies in Africa... you really have to reduce dependency on external resources"⁶⁷.

*"In an African context, this discussion is quite controversial. They're already spending a significant share of their GDP on adapting to climate impacts, but in multilateral forums, they still often – rightfully – stress CBDR and climate justice, pointing out that they didn't create the problem and that developed countries must pay for it. This is, of course, true. At the same time, I see a growing interest in exploring how to further mobilise domestic resources."*⁶⁸ **Hanne Knaepen**

This statement highlights a key tension and emerging dynamic in financing just resilience in Africa. Despite the legitimate argument from African countries that, based on Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) and climate justice, developed nations should financially compensate for climate impacts they predominantly caused, African countries are increasingly considering mobilizing their own domestic resources for climate action, in a pragmatic shift towards greater self-reliance, even as the principle of historical responsibility remains a crucial component of global climate negotiations.

*"Africa needs to take control of shaping its future and take that control into the global processes, not the other way around, not the global processes determining for Africa where it needs to go"*⁶⁹ **Eugene Nforngwa**

3. Prioritise localisation and people-centred approaches

Solutions for just resilience must be locally led and deeply rooted in community priorities⁷⁰. This means going beyond inclusion: genuine participation means that communities must become “the key actors –not the observers, not the beneficiaries –but the change makers themselves”⁷¹. Centering the voice and needs of local people is in contrast to “solutions built in big offices and then implemented on the ground, which have failed to build a peaceful and resilient world”⁷². Localization makes adaptation action resilient in the long term, requiring the devolution of decision-making to the lowest possible level of governance, so that communities manage their own climate actions. Effective localisation of climate action is not just about involvement of front line communities in implementation of climate interventions; rather, it should be characterised by deliberate strategies to ensure community leadership in framing and prioritisation of climate actions.

“It’s mainly because of the lack of inclusion and participation of local communities. Because if a community is engaged, then even if your money might not be sufficient to provide all the solutions, maybe a capacity to continue what you’ve started, is there. They have the knowledge, they have the information they have, the know how. Then they can take the leadership.” **Kossivi Adessou**⁷³

4. Integrate local and indigenous knowledge

Traditional and local knowledge systems, which have often been relegated to the periphery, hold invaluable insights for predicting and preparing for climate impacts. As Carole Agengo notes, “how they would know when it would rain, and how they would know when there would be a drought coming on, and what they would then do to prepare for that drought... these were basic local knowledge issues that are now being pushed aside”⁷⁴. This knowledge needs to be re-centred, potentially with the aid of modern technology like AI, to inform current resilience strategies⁷⁵.

5. Strengthen regional cooperation and governance

While local action is paramount, a comprehensive framework also requires regional cooperation to address transboundary climate risks and shared challenges⁷⁶. Strengthening regional bodies like the African Union and regional economic communities, and giving them more policy-making mandate, can enhance Africa’s collective position and influence actions across the continent⁷⁷.

*“Climate impacts in one part of the world can have consequences elsewhere. These cascading climate risks occur when impacts such as droughts, floods, wildfires, or sea-level rise trigger knock-on effects that cross borders and even continents. They can spread and escalate through interconnected systems such as security relations, trade, or migration, among others. This makes resilience-building and climate adaptation not only a local but also a regional and global imperative.”*⁷⁸ **Hanne Knaepen**

6. Welcome transformation and address root causes

Just resilience requires a transformational approach that challenges existing systems rather than reinforcing them⁷⁹. It acknowledges that climate change is a risk driver that exacerbates existing vulnerabilities like poverty, displacement, and resource degradation⁸⁰. Therefore, solutions must simultaneously address the direct impacts of climate change and its root causes, recognizing the deep interplay of power, people, and politics⁸¹.

*"When you're setting up a fund, you must ask yourself, are you just looking to raise funds, or are you trying to change something with a fund? You must be honest, that in some contexts, you just can't solve the problem without a broader shift in the political structure and economic structure: that's a reality. I think we must live with that fact. So that pushes us to be very clear: what can we support, to lay the groundwork for more long-term solutions?"*⁸² **Salim Fakir**

7. Ensure effective and accountable funding

Funding mechanisms must be reformed to directly reach local communities⁸³. It is also crucial to recognize and value community investment, even if dollar amounts are small, as it demonstrates "deep buy-in"⁸⁴. There is significant critique of funders who claim they "don't know how to channel the money" to the local level, a stance deemed by some to be "ignorant" and "arrogant"⁸⁵.

*"It shouldn't be a technocratic question – how to channel the money – that's indeed very straightforward since the onset of cash transfer or cash-based programming and the use of mobile money such as M-PESA that enables the tracking of funds."*⁸⁶ **Martin Rokitzki**

Many people in rural Africa do not have bank accounts: mobile-phone based money transfer services enable funders to make cash transfers to small local projects with a system of traceable accountability.⁸⁷ For example, CJIFA operationalises this principle by enabling direct cash transfers to grassroots groups through traceable platforms like mobile money (e.g., M-Pesa), remedying the long-standing excuse that funders 'don't know how to reach the local level.

Funders should also be honest about their role, acknowledging that philanthropy alone may not be able to solve long-term systemic problems and often serves as a "Band-aid"⁸⁸.

As highlighted in CJIFA's fundraising model, financing Just Resilience requires both traditional and participatory fundraising, including diaspora engagement, SACCO linkages, and blended finance. These approaches make resilience financing more inclusive, reducing dependency on restrictive donor streams.

8. Support effective recovery

Recovery from disasters is a critical pillar of just resilience: ineffective recovery leads to increased vulnerability and dependency. Adaptation, resilience and disaster recovery efforts must aim to "build back better" than before an incident occurred, and this requires genuine inclusion and

participation of local communities in the recovery process⁸⁹. As Kossivi Adessou explains, "the vulnerability is not only getting worse because of the increasing intensity of climate change, it's also because of the gap in recovery"⁹⁰.

9. Promote nature-based initiatives

Solutions must actively involve and respect nature, recognizing that human actions have altered natural ecosystems. This includes "bringing nature back into the solutions"⁹¹. This can also extend to including nature-centric approaches and – as explored in academic and ethical debates – the idea of interspecies justice.⁹²

10. Embrace the Resilience Continuum to avoid the mitigation / adaptation binary

Both adaptation and mitigation must be foundational pillars of a Just Resilience Framework for Africa because in reality they are not separate; they exist on a continuum of action⁹³: The IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report emphasizes that mitigation and adaptation are intertwined and must be integrated for effective climate action⁹⁴. As Africa contributes minimally to global emissions yet is highly vulnerable to climate impacts, both mitigation and adaptation measures are essential. An integrated approach is vital to create synergies; for example, investing in renewable energy (mitigation) can also build resilience by decentralizing power and creating local jobs (adaptation)⁹⁵.

A framework that separates these two concepts risks "resilience-washing," which can mask systemic issues and shift the burden of climate change onto the most vulnerable communities without addressing its root cause. By linking these actions, the framework ensures that resilience efforts not only help communities cope but also empower them to shape a more just and sustainable future⁹⁶.



Greening Machakos Youth Network

Beyond the mitigation and adaptation divide: Climate actions with Co-Benefits

Mitigation actions can offer co-benefits for adaptation and vice-versa, meaning they simultaneously reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help societies adapt to climate change impacts. Actions that leverage natural systems, such as forestry and ecosystem management, are often the most effective in providing co-benefits. For example, reforestation and afforestation sequester carbon (mitigation) while simultaneously protecting watersheds, controlling soil erosion, and providing natural buffers against extreme weather events like floods and storm surges (adaptation)⁹⁷.

Similarly, sustainable agriculture, such as agroecology and regenerative farming, can enhance soil carbon sequestration (mitigation) while making food systems more resilient to droughts and floods (adaptation)⁹⁸.

In urban areas, green infrastructure such as parks and green roofs cools cities and reduces energy demand for air conditioning (mitigation), while simultaneously managing stormwater runoff and preventing urban flooding (adaptation)⁹⁹.

Trade-Offs

Despite the potential for co-benefits, some actions present significant trade-offs. For example, large-scale irrigation projects designed to adapt to drier climates can lead to increased energy consumption for water pumping, which contributes to emissions (mitigation trade-off). Likewise, the construction of seawalls and other "hard" coastal defenses for adaptation can destroy carbon-rich coastal ecosystems like mangroves and salt marshes, releasing stored carbon and reducing natural mitigation capacity¹⁰⁰. Furthermore, the expansion of certain renewable energy sources can conflict with adaptation goals. Large hydropower dams, while a source of low-carbon energy, can disrupt river ecosystems and displace communities, increasing their vulnerability to climate-related shocks (UNEP, 2017). In addition, the extraction of raw materials for clean technologies, such as lithium for batteries, has been linked to the violation of indigenous land and labor rights¹⁰¹. These examples highlight the importance of careful planning to avoid maladaptation and ensure climate actions are truly effective and equitable.

Grounded in these guiding principles, the following policy and practice recommendations offer concrete ways to integrate just resilience into existing climate action, grouped according to the themes of the second Africa Climate Summit.

POLICY AND PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AN AFRICAN JUST RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

This report maps each recommendation to the stages of the policy cycle and the core dimensions of climate justice. The recommendations are grouped according to the themes of ACS2: Adaptation and Resilience, Climate Finance, and Nature & Tech Solutions.

"We need to build the justice outcomes into resilience work at the very beginning of the design, not thinking about it as an add on which is what perhaps is happening now".¹⁰² Eugene Nforngwa

Dimensions of justice dimensions: four core concepts:

An effective African Just Resilience Framework must integrate multiple dimensions of justice, which are crucial for addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change and historical inequalities.

"True resilience is inherently just: an unequal or unjust society cannot truly be resilient."¹⁰³ Eugene Nforngwa

Recognitional justice involves acknowledging the plurality of societal actors and their differing needs, desires, and abilities for adaptation, while respecting diverse histories, identities, cultural backgrounds, and underlying systemic injustices¹⁰⁴. This is vital in Africa to avoid top-down approaches and foster empowerment acknowledging the distinct knowledge systems and needs of Indigenous People in climate decision-making.

Distributive justice focuses on the fair and equitable allocation of climate change impacts, as well as the costs and benefits of adaptation measures, ensuring that vulnerable communities do not bear disproportionate burdens^{105 106}. Addressing this is critical as climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable groups who often bear less responsibility for creating environmental problems^{107 108}.

"Fixing distributional injustice means re-linking privilege with responsibility, and acknowledging that privilege is power. Everyone who holds positions of privilege have a moral and societal responsibility to contribute to society and not only exploit."¹⁰⁹ Martin Rokitzki

Procedural justice emphasizes fairness and inclusivity in decision-making processes, ensuring that all affected groups, including those often marginalized, can participate meaningfully in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating adaptation strategies^{110 111}. For instance, Indigenous People in Tanzania are actively collaborating with the Tanzania Meteorological Authority on weather forecasting to inform climate decision-making processes at both local and national levels, illustrating procedural justice in practice¹¹².

Restorative justice seeks to address and correct past and present harms, inequalities, and historical injustices, including those stemming from colonialism and environmental degradation, through compensation and remediation efforts¹¹³. This is particularly relevant for an African framework, as climate change is recognized as symptomatic of the history of European and North American colonialism, necessitating decolonization of research and governance processes for transformative change¹¹⁴.

Epistemic justice refers to the full, fair, and equitable inclusion and participation of diverse knowledge systems in problem-framing and decision-making, challenging historical exclusions and the marginalisation of certain forms of knowledge¹¹⁵. For an African Just Resilience Framework, it is vital to decolonise climate research and ensure that Indigenous and local knowledge systems are fully respected, recognized, and integrated into climate solutions, moving beyond treating them as mere data sources¹¹⁶.

“We need to level up the research into local solutions. And local solutions not only from the global north, but also the global majority”. We need to tap into the local knowledge that exists.”¹¹⁷ Carole Osero-Ageng’o

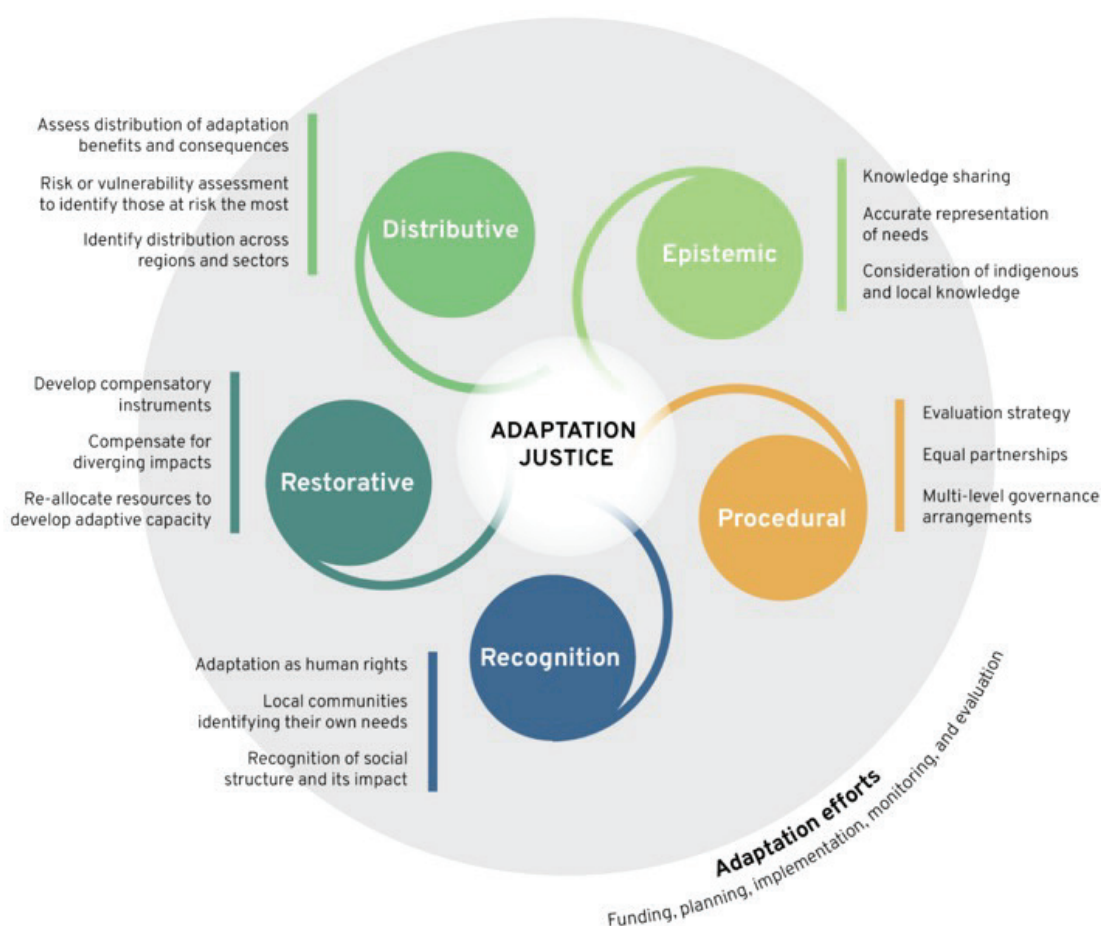


Figure 2: A perspective on the components of adaptation justice and implications in adaptation planning and processes. From 10 insights in climate science 2023: New tools to operationalise justice enable effective climate adaptation¹¹⁸

Policy processes

This report's analysis uses a six-stage policy cycle model: 1) Preparing the ground, 2) Assessing risks and vulnerabilities, 3) Identifying options, 4) Assessing options, 5) Implementation, and 6) Monitoring and evaluation¹¹⁹. This framework provides a structured approach for understanding how issues become government policy and helps to identify where current efforts are concentrated and where critical gaps exist.¹²⁰

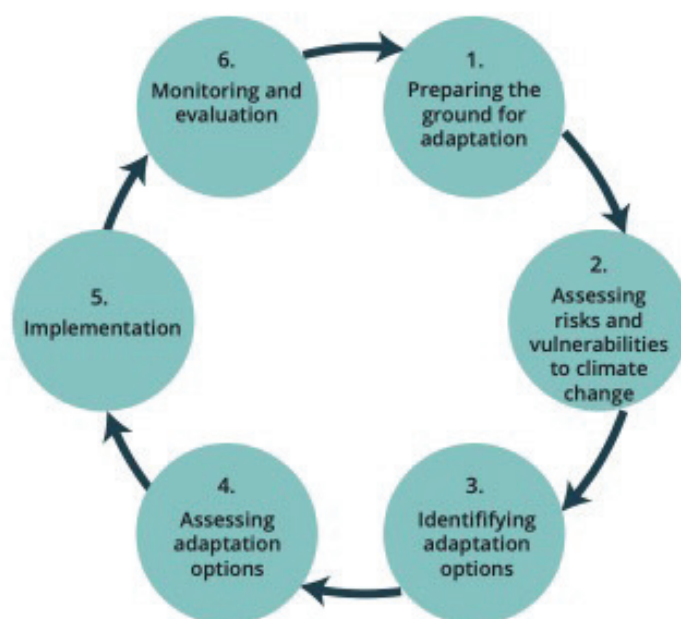


Figure 3: Adaptation policy cycle, based on the European Environment Agency's adaptation support tool¹²¹

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ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

These recommendations focus on building the capacity of people, communities, and systems to respond to and recover from climate impacts. They address the full scope of human and systemic resilience.

Policy Recommendations:

- i. **Embed "just resilience" as a core principle across all climate action**, ensuring fairness, inclusivity, and transformative outcomes.
 - ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground
 - ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Recognitional, Distributive, Procedural, Restorative
 - ◆ **Implementation:** This is implemented by developing a "just resilience" policy framework through a highly consultative process with civil society and vulnerable groups, ensuring that all dimensions of justice are integrated from the foundational stage¹²³.

- ii. **Mainstream resilience into all policy domains**, including foreign policy, security, trade, and finance, not just traditional development. Resilience should be a key criterion in policy impact assessments¹²⁴.
- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground, Assessing options
 - ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural
 - ◆ **Implementation:** For this to be just, all new policies across government sectors must undergo a mandatory climate and social justice impact assessment before they are approved, giving a procedural voice to those who might be affected¹²⁵.
- iii. **Address the root causes of vulnerability and inequality.** Policies should enhance access to resources, capabilities, and opportunities, ensure social protection, protect human rights, address intersectionality, and dismantle unequal power dynamics¹²⁶.
- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground, Identifying options
 - ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Recognitional, Distributive
 - ◆ **Implementation:** In practice, this requires conducting intersectional vulnerability assessments to identify and dismantle the specific power imbalances and systemic barriers that make certain groups more vulnerable to climate impacts¹²⁷.
- iv. **Balance immediate and long-term needs by addressing current challenges.** Ensure that people's current needs are met (e.g., health impacts, economic issues) while simultaneously accelerating decarbonisation and transitioning to sustainable systems that reduce future climate risks. Don't jump straight to resilience planning without caring for current unmet needs¹²⁸.
- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Assessing options, Implementing
 - ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Distributive
 - ◆ **Implementation:** To address this justly, policies should use participatory budgeting to ensure that resources are allocated in a way that prioritizes the most vulnerable and addresses their immediate needs while also investing in long-term resilience¹²⁹.
- v. **Develop comprehensive strategies for human mobility and climate-related migration**, focusing on safe movement, robust adaptation practices, and anticipatory action based on projected migration data¹³⁰.
- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Assessing risks and vulnerabilities, Identifying options
 - ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Distributive, Restorative
 - ◆ **Implementation:** These strategies can be made just by developing them in direct consultation with migrating communities to ensure their rights, safety, and cultural

recognition are central to any new policy¹³¹.

vi. Drive systemic transformation. Achieve long-term shifts in ecological, health, social protection, agri-food, and physical infrastructure systems, fostering change across local, national, regional, and global levels¹³².

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Distributive, Procedural
- ◆ **Implementation:** A just transformation can be ensured by creating a transparent accountability mechanism that tracks how new policies and systemic shifts impact different social groups, ensuring benefits are broadly shared¹³³.

vii. Integrate climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies.

Recognise their significant overlap and combine efforts for greater efficiency and impact, with DRR and post-disaster needs assessments being crucial for effective recovery and reducing vulnerability¹³⁴.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Assessing options, Implementing, Monitoring and evaluation
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural, Distributive
- ◆ **Implementation:** This is done justly by ensuring that post-disaster recovery efforts include restorative justice principles, addressing the historical inequities that made certain communities more vulnerable to begin with¹³⁵.

viii. Address Cascading Climate Risks: Africa's dependency on imports (e.g., West Africa on rice from Thailand and China, Egypt/Tunisia on food from Ukraine) creates vulnerability to climate impacts and geopolitical instability elsewhere. Policies should aim for diversified regional food and energy systems to build resilience against such transboundary risks¹³⁶.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Assessing risks and vulnerabilities; Identifying options
- ◆ **Justice Dimensions:** Distributive; Restorative
- ◆ **Implementation:** To implement this justly, policies should use participatory scenario planning with affected communities, ensuring that the development of regional food and energy systems benefits the most vulnerable and addresses historical dependencies that have created present-day vulnerabilities¹³⁷. This involves establishing equitable trade agreements within the continent that prioritize smallholder farmers and local producers, which can rectify the historical distributive injustices of global trade¹³⁸.

Practice Recommendations:

ix. Ensure meaningful participation and inclusion of all social groups in planning, implementation, and monitoring processes, especially vulnerable and marginalised communities¹³⁹.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground, Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural, Recognitional
- ◆ **Implementation:** To operationalize this, governments should legally mandate the inclusion of representatives from all social groups on climate planning committees and ensure their contributions are formally recognized and integrated into final decisions¹⁴⁰.

x. Improve data accessibility and accuracy for vulnerability assessments and early warning systems, ensuring information is available in diverse, accessible formats and languages¹⁴¹.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground, Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural, Distributive
- ◆ **Implementation:** To achieve this justly, data must be actively translated and disseminated to communities through accessible platforms like local radio and mobile messaging, not just stored in national databases¹⁴².

xi. Invest in continuous learning and knowledge exchange both within and across African countries and regions, fostering peer learning and capacity building that is country-driven and covers technology, finance, education, and public awareness¹⁴³.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground, Monitoring and evaluation
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural, Epistemic
- ◆ **Implementation:** This recommendation can be achieved by establishing a peer-to-peer learning network where successful adaptation strategies from one region can be transparently shared and adapted by others, creating an open and inclusive knowledge-building process¹⁴⁴.

xii. Support locally-led adaptation initiatives by directing funds and resources to local civil society and community-based organisations, enabling them to lead and own their projects¹⁴⁵. Indigenous and local knowledge provides invaluable insights into effective adaptation, because localized risks are often best understood by those on the frontlines of climate impacts¹⁴⁶. This approach fundamentally redefines who is in charge of setting the agenda and executing the solutions, challenging traditional top-down frameworks, asserting that the most pressing problems and most viable solutions should be identified from the bottom up¹⁴⁷.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural, Distributive, Recognitional
- ◆ **Implementation:** In practice, establishing community-led funds and governance boards for adaptation projects ensures that the design and budget allocation are directly controlled by the intended beneficiaries, giving them genuine ownership¹⁴⁸. The process

should be designed to be transparent and accountable, fostering trust and ensuring that the solutions are truly relevant and beneficial to the local context.

CLIMATE FINANCE

These recommendations address the financial systems and resources required to fund climate adaptation and resilience efforts, with a strong focus on equity and accountability.

Policy Recommendations:

- i. **Reform International Financial Institutions (IFIs).** Advocate for reforms such as the International Monetary Fund's Special Drawing Rights reallocation to enable more accessible lending for adaptation and resilience, and Loss and Damage initiatives, and adjust growth models to emphasise debt reduction for low- and middle-income countries¹⁴⁹.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground, Identifying options
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Distributive, Restorative
- ◆ **Implementation:** A just reform requires advocating for decision-making changes at IFIs to include representatives from low-income countries on the boards that determine lending criteria, giving them a voice in the financial systems that impact them¹⁵⁰.

- ii. **Begin a managed phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies.** Form coalitions that can take steps towards a global, managed, and equitable phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, with the revenue gains redirected to climate-resilient development, social safety nets, and the creation of new, green jobs.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground, implementation.
- ◆ **Justice dimension:** restorative, procedural.
- ◆ **Implementation:** A just phase-out requires inclusive, participatory processes that involve all stakeholders, particularly workers and communities dependent on the fossil fuel industry.¹⁵¹ Research shows that fossil fuel subsidies are an inefficient mechanism for supporting the poor, as the benefits disproportionately accrue to higher-income groups.¹⁵² However, their removal can lead to price increases that may impact the most vulnerable. An equitable phase-out requires the redistribution of saved revenue to targeted social spending, such as cash transfers or support for the transition to cleaner energy sources.¹⁵³ Fossil fuel phase-out is highly political and requires careful multilateral processes and policy design to manage the socio-economic impact, including managing the transition for affected workers and communities.¹⁵⁴

- iii. **Promote transparency and accountability in finance** by enhancing cooperation, communication, and disclosure within the financial sector, and reforming risk assessment and monitoring approaches¹⁵⁵.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground, Monitoring and evaluation
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural
- ◆ **Implementation:** In practice, this means requiring climate finance projects to undergo independent, third-party audits to verify that funds are used equitably and that all stakeholders are consulted in the process¹⁵⁶.

iv. Mobilise diverse sources of capital for urban resilience. Incentivise private sector investment through tax incentives, grants, and aligned loan terms, recognising the need for innovative financing approaches at scale¹⁵⁷.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Identifying options, Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Distributive
- ◆ **Implementation:** This can be achieved justly by creating public-private partnerships that include a "justice equity" component, ensuring a percentage of profits are reinvested directly into the most marginalized urban communities¹⁵⁸.

v. Support and proactively engage in debt-for-climate/nature swaps, where debt is forgiven in exchange for climate action¹⁵⁹.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Identifying options, Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Restorative
- ◆ **Implementation:** This is achieved by ensuring that the terms of these swaps are co-negotiated with affected communities to ensure the new climate actions directly benefit those who have been historically burdened by both debt and climate impacts¹⁶⁰.

vi. Meet and exceed adaptation finance commitments. Developed countries must fulfil commitments to allocate a significant portion of climate finance to adaptation in low- and middle-income countries¹⁶¹.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Distributive, Restorative
- ◆ **Implementation:** This is put into practice by creating a transparent, public tracking system for climate finance flows to ensure funds are reaching their intended recipients, and that historical responsibilities for climate change are reflected in the scale of the commitments (UNCTAD, 2023).

vii. Address Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs). Up to \$80 billion a year is leaving African countries due to IFFs, which is a major distributive injustice that starves the public sector of funds needed for development and essential services.¹⁶²

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Implementation, Monitoring and evaluation

- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Distributive, Restorative
- ◆ **Implementation:** Addressing illicit financial flows requires a combination of improved national governance, legal reforms that clarify the boundaries of illicit activities, and international cooperation to track and reclaim money.¹⁶³ This is a powerful tool for rebuilding trust with African partners by demonstrating a commitment to responsible management of resources.¹⁶⁴

Practice Recommendations:

viii. Leverage philanthropy's catalytic role by using it as "first loss" capital, funding experimentation, supporting movements, shifting narratives, and strengthening capacity, particularly for actors historically excluded from processes¹⁶⁵.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Identifying options, Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural, Recognitional, Distributive
- ◆ **Implementation:** In a just manner, philanthropic organizations can create open, simplified funding cycles specifically for grassroots movements, recognizing their central role in adaptation and ensuring they have the resources they need to act¹⁶⁶.

ix. Invest in holistic, integrated climate solutions that address intersecting societal issues such as human rights, public health, and economic development¹⁶⁷.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Identifying options, Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Distributive
- ◆ **Implementation:** This requires using an inter-ministerial task force to ensure that climate investments are integrated with other development goals, such as health and human rights, preventing siloed approaches that can lead to inequitable outcomes¹⁶⁸.

x. Provide direct support to initiatives applying for funding, helping local initiatives access and manage funds effectively based on their knowledge and experience¹⁶⁹.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural
- ◆ **Implementation:** This can be put into practice by establishing a central "help desk" to guide local groups through the complex processes of preparing project proposals and managing funds, removing a significant barrier to accessing finance¹⁷⁰.

xi. Simplify donor-side application, accreditation, and reporting processes to reduce administrative burdens and ensure funds can be deployed more effectively for on-the-ground implementation¹⁷¹.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Implementing, Monitoring and evaluation

- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural
- ◆ **Implementation:** This can be achieved by establishing a regional oversight committee composed of diverse local stakeholders to review and streamline donor requirements, ensuring they are practical and not excessively burdensome¹⁷².

NATURE AND TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

These recommendations focus on leveraging both natural ecosystems and innovative technologies to create effective, data-driven, and resilient climate solutions.

Policy recommendations

- i. **Decolonise climate response by valuing African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK).** Climate education and research should honour indigenous methodologies, worldviews, and practices to disrupt colonial legacies and enhance resilience and sustainability¹⁷³.
 - ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground, Identifying options
 - ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Recognitional, Procedural, Epistemic
 - ◆ **Implementation:** To do this effectively, policies should mandate the co-design of climate education and research with Indigenous leaders and knowledge holders, disrupting colonial legacies that have historically marginalized their perspectives¹⁷⁴.
- ii. **Support interspecies justice and nature-centric approaches.** Acknowledge and integrate the holistic view of nature into resilience efforts. Recognise that climate change impacts fundamental natural functions of ecosystems¹⁷⁵.
 - ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground
 - ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Recognitional
 - ◆ **Implementation:** This is put into practice by embedding the rights of nature and the holistic view of ecosystems into legal frameworks and conservation policies, ensuring that human development does not come at the expense of ecological health¹⁷⁶.
- iii. **Accelerate deployment of renewable energy.** Provide access to affordable and reliable energy to the approximately 600 million people in Africa who still lack electricity, allowing the continent to "leapfrog" the fossil fuel era and pursue a low-carbon development path.¹⁷⁷
 - ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground, Implementing.
 - ◆ **Justice dimension:** Distributive, Procedural, Recognitional, Epistemic
 - ◆ **Implementation:** A just energy transition requires that stakeholders, including local communities and indigenous groups, are given a formal role in both the planning and execution of energy projects.¹⁷⁸ Renewable energy development must prevent forced displacement and land dispossession by prioritizing the rights and livelihoods of local

communities¹⁷⁹. Priority should be given to decentralized renewable energy solutions, such as solar microgrids or small-scale hydroelectric projects, that are tailored to the specific needs of rural and semi-urban populations.¹⁸⁰

iv. Strengthen climate information and early warning systems. Develop multi-hazard early warning systems and tailor actionable climate information and communications to aid community preparedness and response. This includes disseminating high-quality heat forecasting and investing in innovative technologies like AI and machine learning for data collection and analysis¹⁸¹.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground, Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural, Distributive, Epistemic
- ◆ **Implementation:** For justice to be served, these systems must be accessible to all, including marginalized groups, by disseminating information in local languages and through formats that are understandable and actionable, such as mobile messages and community radio¹⁸².

v. Integrate Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) into adaptation plans. Design and finance NbS for coastal protection (e.g., wetland and coastal ecosystem restoration), sustainable freshwater access (e.g., riverbank restoration), and urban greenspaces¹⁸³.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Identifying options, Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Distributive, Recognitional, Epistemic
- ◆ **Implementation:** In practice, this requires ensuring that the benefits of NbS, such as improved air quality and flood protection, are equitably distributed and that local communities are consulted in the design and implementation to recognize their unique needs and traditional land use practices (UNEP, 2021).

vi. Prioritise climate-smart agriculture and resilient food systems. Integrate traditional knowledge with modern technologies to build resilient food systems.¹⁸⁴ Combine indigenous knowledge of climate-resilient crop varieties and livestock, and learn from traditional methods for predicting and preparing for foods and droughts.¹⁸⁵ Implement practices that minimise soil degradation, use organic materials/biofertilisers, and reduce synthetic fertiliser use.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Identifying options, Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Distributive
- ◆ **Implementation:** Achieving this justly means providing equitable access to resilient crop varieties, technology, and training for smallholder farmers, particularly women, to ensure they have the resources needed to adapt and maintain their livelihoods (FAO, 2020). Sustainable and climate-smart policies should be mainstreamed into core government planning, and their implementation should be supported through partnerships with organizations like the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD.

Practice Recommendations:

vii. Prioritise locally-led climate information systems by ensuring climate data is accurate, actionable, and shared transparently as a public good, empowering local "data brokers"¹⁸⁶.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Preparing the ground, Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural, Distributive, Epistemic
- ◆ **Implementation:** In practice, this involves training and resourcing local "data brokers" to translate complex climate data into actionable insights for their communities, ensuring that this information is transparently and equitably shared¹⁸⁷.

viii. Actively engage impacted community members in co-producing knowledge and designing practical adaptation strategies, drawing on their first-hand experience of climate impacts¹⁸⁸.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Identifying options
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural, Recognition, Epistemic
- ◆ **Implementation:** A just approach requires establishing formal, safe, and resourced forums for community members to contribute their first-hand experience and knowledge, ensuring they are not just consulted but are equal partners from the start¹⁸⁹.

ix. Support community-led initiatives that leverage local and indigenous knowledge, such as reviving community seed banks with drought-resistant local varieties or community-led reforestation efforts¹⁹⁰.

- ◆ **Policy Cycle:** Implementing
- ◆ **Justice Dimension:** Procedural, Recognition, Epistemic
- ◆ **Implementation:** This is achieved by providing direct and flexible funding to community groups, empowering them to lead and own projects, and formally recognizing their local knowledge as a key asset in climate adaptation¹⁹¹.

THE ROLE OF AFRICAN FUNDERS IN PROMOTING JUST RESILIENCE

The Climate Justice Impact Fund for Africa (CJIFA) promotes African Just Resilience by serving as a transformative financing and capacity-building facility designed to directly support local and grassroots organisations. It emerged as a bold response to the historical exclusion of frontline communities—including women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and people with disabilities—from global climate finance mechanisms. CJIFA aims to provide predictable, flexible, and accessible funding to these groups, who are best placed to deliver transformative, context-specific climate solutions.

More than just a fund, CJIFA is conceptualised as a mobilising platform and a solidarity movement, committed to shifting power and resources to African local actors, ensuring that true adaptation and resilience emerge from locally grounded leadership, indigenous knowledge, and community-driven systems of care.

*"If you can – on a local level – build a constituency of people that are able to engage on these issues in a collective way, they then become a voice at the local level with funders or with political authorities".*¹⁹² **Saliem Fakir**

In its pursuit of equitable and efficient climate finance, CJIFA is inviting collaboration with other African and Global South regranters. This potential collaboration is driven by the understanding that many major funders are structured to make very large grants, which often excludes smaller African regranters, including CJIFA itself. By exploring the formation of a trusting coalition of intermediaries, and creating a "Reverse Call for Proposals," CJIFA seeks to provide major funders with enhanced access to locally led adaptation and resilience initiatives. This strategy is designed to ensure international adaptation and resilience finance quickly and fairly reaches Africa's most vulnerable people, communities, and ecosystems. Such a collaborative approach is expected to deliver more integrated, context-specific, agile, efficient, democratic, and accountable solutions, restoring agency on climate action to frontline communities.

The launch of the "Towards a Just Resilience Framework for Africa" paper further underscores CJIFA's commitment to this overarching goal.

*"We want to flip the narrative and position. Africa in the global space as an enabler of the transition rather than only as victims of climate change. It's not one or the other. It's just projecting one a little more strongly".*¹⁹³ **Eugene Nforngwa**



*Bamboo seedlings at Associacao Dos Amigos Do Bambu – Assamba
(Bamboo Friends Association) farm in Mozambique*

CONCLUSION

Building Just Resilience in Africa requires a fundamental shift in mindset, one that embraces transformation and recognizes the deep links between climate, social, and political systems. By prioritizing the most vulnerable, valuing indigenous knowledge, and ensuring that communities are not just beneficiaries but rightsholders, Africa can forge a path forward that is not only resilient but also more equitable, prosperous, and sustainable for all its citizens. The goal is to make the concept of just resilience so clear that everyone, from policymakers to community members, can understand and act on it. This is the essence of an African-led future: one where resilience is inherently just.



ENDNOTES

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