



## AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS KEY DEMANDS FOR COP 29<sup>1</sup>

### Context

1. The historical significance of the UNFCCC process and the Paris Agreement continue to be validated, as noted in the first Global Stocktake (GST). Africa, the least contributor to the historical accumulation of greenhouse gases (GHG), is the hardest hit by the negative impact of climate change, underscoring the inbuilt quest for climate justice in the 1992 UNFCCC and the 2015 Paris Agreement.<sup>2</sup>
2. The best available science confirms that current levels of climate action fall below what is needed to avoid crossing climate tipping points and descending into catastrophe.<sup>3</sup> The existential character of the climate crisis is underscored by the GST's urgent call to reduce emissions by some 43% below by 2030.<sup>4</sup> In this connection, developed countries have to live up to their obligations and provide the developing countries with the means of implementing GHG emission reduction and their energy transition without compromising African countries' industrialisation.
3. While the global community grapples to realise the 1.5-degree goal, the hard-hitting impacts of climate change in Africa, in particular, necessitate prioritising adaptation measures. The last two years, for example, have witnessed the unprecedented escalation of climate-related disasters, diseases and hazards in Africa - the accelerating temperature rise, increased frequency of extreme weather that is worsening food insecurity, displacing people and inducing migration, falling agricultural production; and rising losses and damages.<sup>5</sup> Concretely, over 110 million people on the continent were directly affected by weather, climate and water-related hazards in 2022, causing more than US\$ 8.5 billion in economic

<sup>1</sup> ITUC-Africa organised a meeting ahead of COP 29 scheduled to take place in Baku from 12- 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024 on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 and unanimously agreed on the African Trade Union Key demands to COP 29.

<sup>2</sup> UNFCCC <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>

<sup>3</sup> OECD, 2022. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/79d6949d-en.pdf?expires=1730454560&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=B79B7C12D9B3ECF3634BB22794D14509#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Intergovernmental%20Panel,%2C%202021%5B1%5D>.

<sup>4</sup> GST, <https://unfccc.int/documents/637073>

<sup>5</sup> UN: Africa suffers disproportionately from climate change <https://ghana.un.org/en/244689-africa-suffers-disproportionately-climate-change> [Accessed on 30th October 2024]

damages. According to the Emergency Event Database, there were 5,000 fatalities, of which 48% and 43% were associated with drought and floods, respectively.<sup>6</sup>

4. Critically, the daunting climate and environmental debacle seriously undermine efforts to deal with hydra-headed socio-economic challenges in Africa. For example, more than half of the world's 700 million people living in extreme poverty (i.e., less than \$1.90 a day) are in Africa.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, the figure is still increasing, with women, migrants, and rural people being disproportionately affected, according to a recent World Bank report. Again, the nine poorest countries in the world - using GDP as a measure - are all in Africa.<sup>8</sup> The growing unemployment, underemployment, decent work deficits and inequalities are more disturbing because Africa is the most youthful region, with over 60% of the population under 25 years.<sup>9</sup>
5. The dire socio-economic conditions in African countries informed the 2023 ILC Resolution on Just Transition,<sup>10</sup> which all Governments have already signed onto, thus obliging Parties at COP 29 to make decisions that align with the promotion of decent work standards, including all the fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW) and the progressive realisation of universal social protection. Indeed, a just transition is imperative to realise the ILO's mandate for social justice and a human-centred approach to the future of work.
6. Meanwhile, with the heightening geopolitical tensions and conflicts, military spending is now overwhelming countries' budgets: even when guns are not fired, they are still being purchased at the expense of climate finance obligations. Additionally, countries prosecuting wars in flagrant violation of international law are not only undermining multilateralism, the basis of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, but they are also fuelling GHG emissions.
7. The dire socio-economic conditions in Africa, accentuated by burdensome debt servicing obligations **and abandoned climate finance commitments** make the shared agreement on a New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) a must, with renewed climate finance components.

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<sup>6</sup> ibid

<sup>7</sup> UN Global Compact, *Strong Markets and Strong Societies go Hand in Hand*

<https://unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/our-work/social/poverty#:~:text=More%20than%20700%20million%20people,of%20conflicts%20and%20climate%20change>. (Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2024)

<sup>8</sup> <https://sapa-usa.org/top-poorest-countries-in-the-world/#:~:text=Sadly%2C%20South%20Sudan%20holds%20that,people%20struggling%20with%20extreme%20poverty>.

<sup>9</sup> World Economic Forum, *How Africa's Youth will Drive Global Growth*, August 16, 2023,

<https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/08/africa-youth-global-growth-digital-economy/#:~:text=Africa%20is%20a%20continent%20teeming,under%20the%20age%20of%202025>.

<sup>10</sup> ILO Resolution concerning a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all

<https://www.ilo.org/resource/ilc/111/resolution-concerning-just-transition-towards-environmentally-sustainable>

## **Priority Demands of the African Trade Unions**

### **A. Climate Finance**

COP 29 must deliver on the NCQG with a robust climate finance component and mechanisms to ensure that developed countries fulfil their historical responsibilities. More accessible, affordable and adequate climate finance must be secured, with finance dedicated to specific sectors. While mobilising private finance for climate investment, the core of the finance within the NCQG must be public and primarily grants and concessional loans, and ensure public ownership and control over strategic sectors like energy, public transport, raw materials, and water, which are essential for climate transition, without burdening developing countries with increased sovereign debts. The NCQG must deliver on industrial and productive development prospects that are consistent with climate measures through effective technology development and transfer, noting that these are a crucial part of just transition as agreed by Parties in the ILO Resolution on Just Transition<sup>11</sup>

### **B. Mitigation, Energy Transition and Industrialisation**

The growing emission reduction gap established by the GST shows clearly that even if African countries implemented all mitigation measures fully, it would not result in a 43% emission reduction by 2030. Therefore, industrialised countries must lead in raising their climate ambition. Besides, COP 29 must demonstrate readiness to support the African countries' NDC reviews. Again, mitigation measures in Africa depend very much on energy transition. Considering that over 600 million people, especially rural women, do not have access to electricity, an energy transition must be pursued to address this developmental gap that SDG Seven seeks to address. Finally, energy transition must not compromise the industrialisation agenda of the African countries. In this connection, the technology development and transfer rules must also change to drive sustainable development and industrialisation goals in African countries.

### **C. Adaptation**

COP 29 must build on the framework of the Global Goal on Adaptation. First, including social protection in the framework is another pathway for substantially reducing the adverse effects of climate change on poverty eradication and livelihoods, particularly by using adaptive social protection measures. Also, decisions at the COP must underscore the importance of social dialogue as an indispensable means of making decisions, especially about social protection and all other adaptive measures. Secure adaptation funds for the nature-based agroecology climate-smart and –resilient agricultural innovations. Above all, COP 29 must decide on means of measuring adaptation progress by establishing targets and indicators in the framework of GGA.

### **D. Loss and Damage**

The Dubai COP established the loss and damage fund. COP 29 must decide to operationalise it. It must also review the governance framework and its Secretariat to ensure cost-effectiveness and efficiency in its establishment; meanwhile, given the estimated annual cost of damage to be \$100-\$580 billion, the \$700 million pledged by the wealthy industrialised countries needs to be revised.

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<sup>11</sup> Paragraph 20, of 2023 ILC Resolution on Just Transition.

## **E. Just Transition**

COP 29 must build on the far-reaching decision on the Just Transition Work Programme (JTWP), which mentioned the importance of labour rights. COP 29 must secure the explicit elaboration of decisions using the agreed definition of labour rights – including the right to freedom of association, social dialogue, safety and health, and social protection for all workers, especially informal economy workers, women, migrants and others in vulnerable groups. Governments must fully commit to implementing the JTWP as defined in Dubai and the 2023 ILC Resolution on Just Transition.<sup>12</sup> Countries must demonstrate commitment by explicitly incorporating Just Transition in their NDCs and show quantitative and qualitative means of measuring progress. Both social dialogue with workers and stakeholder engagement with affected communities must be mentioned – to recognise the specific importance of social dialogue between workers, governments, and employers, alongside the related process of engaging with stakeholders. In particular, COP 29 must secure commitments to implement all elements of the JTWP using social dialogue to promote human and labour rights, social protection, gender equality and social inclusion.

### **Strategic Perspectives**

The African Trade Union Movement reiterates its commitment to collaborate with governments, employers, and others in civil society to elaborate on the content and direction of a just transition for workers and their communities. Furthermore, the ITUC-Africa will continue to elaborate on the sector-specific pathways for the transition to be just, focusing on decent employment creation in agriculture and forestry, energy, industry, and waste management, and campaign for the progressive extension of human and labour rights to all workers, especially informal economy workers, women, and migrant, and promote socio-economic cohesion.

***Lome, 12 November 2024***



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