

INFORSE East Africa Position to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP26), in Glasgow, UK in November 2021 (October 19, 2021)



We the Civil Society Organisations under the umbrella of the International Network for Sustainable Energy (INFORSE East Africa) coordinated by SusWatch Kenya, TaTEDO - Centre for Sustainable Energy Services, Tanzania, and Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development would like to share our position ahead of the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), due to take place in November 2021, in Glasgow, UK.



This position flags out the following priority issues that we think negotiators at COP26 must take into account in their deliberations, as they have a direct effect on climate action in East Africa that is under threat from extreme weather stresses including drought, floods, Locusts etc. These include climate finance, adaptation, mitigation, as well as issues failed at the COP25 negotiations in Madrid in 2019 that were pushed to COP26.



We, therefore, urge the UNFCCC Parties to grab the historical opportunity, learning from the mistakes of the past, and lead the way to a safe, sustainable 100% renewables future for the Earth. It is technically possible to shift from the fossil era to renewables while sustaining economic growth. There is a need to implement the already committed pathway. We also urge for prioritization of local climate and sustainable decentralised solutions rather than centralised ones, which also increase sustainable development. We call for a departure from the idea of any investment in unsustainable, unsafe solutions for the earth, which are a gamble on our future.



Climate Finance

The commitment for developed country parties to annually mobilize climate finance of 100 USD billion by 2020 to developing countries is critical to enabling action and sustaining trust in international cooperation.

Developed countries are yet to meet the above climate finance goal. We call on developed countries to come forward with a clear delivery plan for the promised \$500 billion of balanced climate finance for adaptation and mitigation for developing countries for the 5-year period (2020 to 2024) prior to setting the new climate finance goal. The priority of funding for climate adaptation is important to correct the large-scale imbalance and gap of funding for adaptation and resilience, as our countries suffer on the front-line of climate change.

International climate finance shall be new and additional, i.e., additional to Official Development Assistance (ODA) flow commitments. It shall also be balanced with at least 50% for climate adaptation, given the humanitarian situation created by climate change in East Africa and many other developing countries. Such climate finance should significantly strengthen funding to the Adaptation Fund, Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF). Improved transparency on how much is being provided and reaching developing countries, as well as better predictability, accessibility, and adequate provision of finance is also vital. In particular, pledged mitigation and adaptation funds must reach all developing countries.

Vulnerability criteria for resource allocation, moving beyond GDP per capita criteria, should be included in the formal decision making within the GEF, GCF and other climate finance providers.

The COP26 must also operationalize the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage (SNLD), which must be driven by Parties and centred upon the needs of vulnerable developing countries. SNLD must be inclusive and transparent.

Adaptation

A focus on climate change adaptation in the developing world must be a priority for the financing. The IPCC projects that climate change alone could force more than 3 million to 16 million people into extreme poverty, mostly in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and through impacts on agriculture and food prices. The Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia regions together will generate 143 million climate migrants by 2050, unless adequate climate adaptation is made.

It is therefore urgent to increase adaptive capacities of those at the frontline of climate change, to ensure that poverty reduction efforts continue unencumbered. Adaptation should be community driven and take full use of local solutions, sustainable solutions that contribute to development. Adaptation shall also cover ecosystem protection - protecting forests, wetlands, etc in order to address human and naturally induced extreme weather events like floods and droughts.

Mitigation

The conditional mitigation parts of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for the East African Countries represent the most ambitious contributions to the Paris Agreement on climate mitigation. The East African countries and funding partners must cooperate to realize the updated NDC targets with *priority of sustainable local solutions that also contribute to poverty reduction and development* and with a target of 100% renewable energy.

Climate finance brings a historical opportunity for East Africa, and the developing world to choose a sustainable development path, not repeat the mistakes of the industrialised countries. This is through dropping investment in fossil fuels, and nuclear, and directing this to renewable energy, while at the same time addressing the need to reduce energy demand with scale up energy efficiency.

The 100% renewable energy future is possible as this is also documented in several scenarios. For example, in Suswatch Kenya's scenario, renewable energy technologies have fallen in price drastically, and continue doing so. Such potential looms large in East Africa as the sun shines for far longer periods compared to the northern hemisphere. There are also untapped potentials of wind, geothermal, biogas, and improved efficiency. The scenarios are compatible with expected economic growth in for instance East Africa. They also boost the local economy with focus on local solutions and bring jobs. The local solution also can contribute to climate adaptation, and to development with increasing livelihood, energy access and income generation. (e.g. solar PV pumping water for clean drinking water, and irrigation; solar PV home systems and community mini grids powering light, refrigerators, mobiles phones, TV, and production equipment; improved cook stoves with chimney for both household and institutions as schools; biogas for cooking; solar food dryers; solar cookers; hay boxes; organic gardening and composting; tree planting; and transportation with bicycles/tricycles for go to school, and work, and for carry goods).

Improved efficiency reduces the demand on fuels e.g., improved cook stoves need less fuel wood, efficient household equipment, LED lamps need less electricity etc. The solutions are readily available worldwide. To increase their visibility, INFORSE-East Africa organisations collected over 50 such solutions in the form of a Catalogue available online and in print form.

The CO₂ mitigation is also substantial, as the cumulative reductions for each solution add up when millions are using them. Calculation methodologies of mitigation effects are also available, which can be used in the NDCs. One example is a calculation methodology for local solutions of Eco-Village Development in South Asia, published in a White Paper by INFORSE. Investment into climate friendly sustainable transport is also an area where there are gaps. This needs investment in frequent, safe, and clean public transport such as trains and buses, and bicycle infrastructure with bicycle roads, pavements for walking, and streetlights.

It is important that climate plans, including coming NDCs, does not include “false solutions”, i.e., technologies and practices that pose real and present dangers for communities around the world. The Paris Agreement opens the door to negative emissions technologies (NETs) which sequester carbon.

This can include unsustainable forest restoration and reforestation practices such as monoculture planting, and geo-engineering techniques as well as large-scale ‘Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage’ (BECCS), a risky and unproven method involving burning biomass to generate electricity, capturing the carbon and pumping it into underground geological reservoirs. This focus on NETs threatens the transition to clean energy, can cause harm for the environment and local population, and can legitimize continued fossil fuel expansion. Bioenergy based NETs also tend to lead to a rush of global land grabbing that will dwarf current environmental and social impacts of biofuels.

The Paris Agreement also - might -opens the door for nuclear power that, with its very slow development time and very high costs, would slow down climate mitigation compared to using renewable energy. Nuclear energy has dangerous safety and security problems as well as the unsolved waste problems that introduce its own set of risks and long-term problems. If implemented in East Africa, it also introduces a long-term national dependency of the nuclear technology provider.

Therefore, the introduction of nuclear energy in East Africa, is neither plausible nor cost effective, and can result in catastrophic disasters, which many East African Countries cannot cope with. The costs, which are not even estimated related to a nuclear accident, a terrorist action, leakages of waste to the ground water (evacuation, hospitalization of people with health effects of nuclear radiation e.g., cancer, defected birth of children, and death). There is no insurance company who would bear these costs. The cost of demolishing the plant after 30 years is underestimated, the storage of the waste is unsolved, and the temporary storage is opposed by the communities. Additional risk is that corruption can weaken the building and maintenance standards, which can have fatal consequences.

As a consequence, several governments have already ruled out or placed extensive regulatory barriers on any new nuclear energy generation (#FixtheWEO, 2021).

The climate financing resources need to be used on solutions, not paving the way to a potential environmental and health catastrophe in East Africa for a very high price. Do not export unsafe technology to East Africa.

Paris Agreement’s pending issues

Transparency framework - flexibility, tables, etc

Parties must deliver on Common Reporting Tables (CRT), Common Tabular Formats (CTF), various report outlines and a training program in COP 26. The existing tables for developed country Parties offer a good starting point, but must be updated to reflect the MPGs as decided in COP 24 in Katowice. Parties must not “backslide” on any of their reporting requirements. Parties must uphold the TACCC principles (transparency, accuracy, consistency, comparability and completeness) in operationalizing flexibility in the table which has been a key challenge facing parties in the past. It should be recognized that Parties have different starting points, thus, flexibility should not compromise efforts to compare reports. We believe that deleting columns, rows, or tables is not an appropriate application of flexibility.

Discussions on the linkages between Article 6 and enhanced transparency framework and should proceed in parallel without prejudging outcomes. The provisions of paragraph 77(d) of 18/CMA.1 are crucial in ensuring no double counting and upholding environmental integrity. Thus paragraph 77(d) plays an important role in upholding vital Paris Agreement principles, and applicability to Article 6 in its entirety.

Common time frames

INFORSE East Africa also joins the calls for a COP26 decision in favour of a single 5-year common time frame for NDCs. Agreement on common implementation periods for future Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) is essential to the effective operation of the Paris Agreement ambition mechanism. Parties must therefore move with speed to progress on discussions and a decision be made on the single 5-year Common time frame for NDCs.

We also acknowledge some progress on transparency with the emergence of draft tables (Excel file) to be used to report and facilitate the sort of audit that countries need to do. We also take note of remaining areas for negotiation such as agreeing on “common reporting tables” and tabular formats that countries would use to report their emissions inventories and other information.

Action is also needed by major emitters given the most recently upgraded Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) concern only around half of all GHG emissions. Countries who have yet to upgrade NDCs in 2020-21 should do so prior to COP26. If a shortfall in ambition remains to safeguard 1.5°C, new ambition-raising timeframes and platforms prior to the next, already mandated NDC submission deadline of 2025 should be set by COP26. Improved transparency, especially of NDCs and their implementation, is needed with countries presenting information in a consistent, robust and clear way via the common tabular formats, to assist understanding of what has been committed and delivered.

Global Stocktake

The periodic Global Stocktake (GST) to assess the collective progress towards achieving the purpose of this Agreement and its long-term goals should recognize that non-party stakeholders are an important source of information and can help to monitor compliance with states’ obligations and pledges. Not the least, civil society stakeholders can provide valuable input and could also participate in the modalities of the global stocktake.

Many civil society stakeholders undertake peer-reviewed analysis of the impact of national policies and targets and these could contribute to an understanding of the overall effect of Parties’ Nationally Determined Contributions. Information by civil society stakeholders on the current impact and potential of climate action could serve as input during the stocktaking process to help inform Parties about efforts and opportunities that may be relevant when revising their NDCs. Additionally, information on local climate solutions that also support poverty reduction and development is valuable to include all climate action in the stocktake and to show a path forward combining climate action with development.

We call for the UNFCCC Secretariat to come up with clear and effective ‘rules of engagement’ for organising non-party stakeholder inputs.

Implementation framework

We call upon Parties who have not submitted their NDCs to do so and report on the implementation for timely global stocktake that should include local solutions with their mitigation and adaptation effects.

We underscore the importance of capacity building and technology transfer and development for supporting the realization of ambition on the ground in actions to build climate resilience and advance climate action on all fronts.

Therefore, the international community and COP26 must advance ambitious enhancements not only in the domain of finance but also in capacity building and strong technology development and transfer including focus on local well adapted climate solutions, in order to support more effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Gender Action Plan

We emphasize that deliberate efforts should be made to enhance capacity on African countries negotiations with priority to be given to women, people with disabilities, and youth negotiators. African countries should also make best use of experts from civil society and include them as part of their delegation to enhance the limited capacity.

Currently 2.6 billion people are without access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking – 61% of them in Asia and 36% in Africa (SEforALL, 2021). Lack of access to clean cooking amplifies the vulnerability of women and of communities at large. Recent studies suggest that people exposed to air pollution are more likely to die from COVID-19 than people living in areas with cleaner air. This makes communities (specifically women) using inefficient polluting cookstoves much more vulnerable to the current COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19 and its mitigation measures limit women’s engagement in economic activities and exacerbate existing gender inequalities. Women are hit harder by the economic impacts of COVID-19 because they are more likely than men to be working in low-paying informal jobs and in the direct service sector. In addition, COVID-19 contributes to an increase in women’s care burden.

We therefore urge climate finance to be made available to support developing countries in implementation of the Gender Action Plan.

Participation and Inclusiveness

For effective participation and inclusiveness of COP 26, global vaccine inequity must be addressed by rich nations. Currently, most of the poor countries appear in the red list countries under the UK rules. But they are also the hardest hit by Climate Change. Therefore the INFORSE East Africa calls on the wealthy countries to address the global vaccine inequity without delay.

We welcome the UK Government’s commitment (as COP26 co-host) to work with all countries and joining forces with civil society, companies and vulnerable communities to scale up climate action ahead of COP26.

We also call upon Parties to enhance openness, fairness, transparency and inclusiveness, effective participation and engagement of observers at all levels – from national to global levels.

Above all, we emphasize that engagement of civil society actors should be at all levels, including consultations in decision-making processes and the engagements should NOT be limited to implementation only at local level.

This Civil Society Position Paper towards the UNFCCC COP26 was prepared by a team of NGOs, which are member of INFORSE cooperating in the “East African Civil Society for Sustainable Energy and Climate Action (EASE & CA) Project’. The organisations include **INFORSE-East Africa** members and coordinators: **TaTEDO, UCSD, JEEP, Suswatch, and NFRE, & INFORSE Global Secretariat.**

INFORSE participates on the COP26 with side event (5/11) and exhibition, and cooperating with the civil society community and respective constituencies (ENGO, WGC etc.)

More information: INFORSE-East Africa at COP26 www.inforse.org/cop26.php3

EASE-CA Project: www.inforse.org/africa/EASE.htm

TaTEDO: www.tatedo.or.tz & UCSD: www.ugandacoalition.or.ug & SusWatch: www.suswatchkenya.org

Catalogue of 60+ Local Sustainable Solutions: www.localsolutions.inforse.org

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