

KEY MESSAGES FOR SADC HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT IN DURBAN

The Durban Position of Southern African Civil Society on Climate Finance and Climate Justice

46th SADC Summit | Durban | 17 August 2026

"Climate finance is not charity. It is an investment in justice, resilience, and the future prosperity of Southern Africa."

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,

We, the undersigned Southern African civil society organisations, community movements, faith-based organisations, youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, researchers, and climate justice advocates, respectfully submit this statement to the SADC Summit at a time when our region faces one of the greatest challenges of our generation.

Climate change is no longer a distant environmental concern. It is undermining our economies, threatening regional stability, reversing development gains, and placing millions of Southern Africans at risk. Every year, our region experiences more frequent and severe droughts, floods, cyclones, heatwaves, and water shortages. These climate impacts are destroying crops, displacing communities, damaging infrastructure, increasing food prices, and deepening poverty and inequality. Climate change is now Southern Africa's greatest development change. Every drought, cyclone, flood, and heatwave erodes decades of development gains, increases poverty, and threatens regional stability. It must be acknowledged that our renewable energy resources, biodiversity, **Agriculture, critical minerals**, fertile landscapes, and young population position the region to lead a **just and inclusive green transition**.

The people of Southern Africa are showing extraordinary resilience. However, resilience alone cannot withstand an accelerating climate crisis without adequate financial support.

As SADC leaders prepare to engage in global climate negotiations at COP 31 and represent the interests of over 380 million Southern Africans, we urge you to champion an ambitious and united regional position on climate finance that reflects both the urgency of our realities and the aspirations of our people. This position will help the SADC heads of government demonstrate strong leadership as they prepare for COP 31 and 32.

1. Climate finance is essential for achieving SADC Vision 2050 to minimize Africa's debt burden.

Debt: SADC leaders must engage actively in the UN Tax Convention negotiations and push for an ambitious reform of the international taxation system, tackle fiscal avoidance and evasion, and scale up domestic resource mobilization to support Southern African countries' climate action and development agenda.

Tax: On debt: support the 2024 Lome Declaration and keep on calling for a UN Debt Convention

Without adequate and accessible climate finance, our ambitions for industrialization, food security, energy security, water security, and economic transformation cannot be realized.

2. Southern Africa must speak with one united voice.

A strong and coordinated SADC position will reinforce the Africa Group of Negotiators and strengthen Africa's influence in global climate negotiations for a **Just Transition**.

3. Adaptation must become Africa's climate finance priority.

For Southern Africa, adaptation means **protecting farmers**, securing water resources, **building resilient infrastructure**, safeguarding public health, and protecting livelihoods.

4. The Loss and Damage Fund must be urgently resourced to be able to deliver for vulnerable communities in the region.

Communities devastated by cyclones, floods, and prolonged droughts need timely, predictable, and accessible support, especially direct and simplified access to climate finance to recover and rebuild with dignity.

Finance for adaptation and responding to loss and damage should be provided primarily through grants and highly concessional finance—not loans that further constrain our development.

5. Reforming the global financial system is essential for climate justice.

Southern African countries should not bear the highest borrowing costs, as they have a negligible historical responsibility for the climate crisis.

6. Durban must send a clear and bold message to the world.

Southern Africa is ready to lead in building climate-resilient economies, infrastructure, and knowledge systems, with its universities and research institutions at the heart of innovation, skills development, and regional integration. **Our abundant critical minerals** must become a foundation for *shared prosperity and local value addition—not another cycle of extraction and*

dependency. But Southern Africa cannot deliver this transformation alone. Global climate commitments must now be matched with *accessible finance, fair partnerships, technology, capacity-building and concrete action* that enables the region to build a resilient and prosperous future on its own terms

Our Collective Call

We respectfully call upon SADC Heads of State and Government to champion a regional position that will:

- Advocate for reform of the international financial architecture to reduce debt burdens and improve access to affordable and sustainable climate finance.
- Secure ambitious, predictable, and equitable climate finance.
- Prioritise adaptation and resilience across Southern Africa.
- Ensure full operationalization and capitalization of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage.
- Promote direct access to climate finance for local communities and frontline institutions.
- Mobilize investments that accelerate renewable energy roll-out, climate-smart agriculture, resilient infrastructure, ecosystem restoration, and green and sustainable industrialization.
- Establish a joint SADC Climate Finance and Resilience Platform to coordinate regional priorities, strengthen project preparation, and improve access to international climate finance.

Our Closing Message

Your Excellencies,

The decisions taken in Durban can help define Southern Africa's future.

This August Summit now offers an opportunity to reaffirm SADC's tradition of solidarity, collective leadership, and regional cooperation by placing climate finance at the center of sustainable development and economic transformation.

Our region has demonstrated resilience in the face of recurring and intensifying climate shocks. So, as civil society, what we need now is leadership that is equally resilient, united, and visionary.

We are asking for:

1. Justice.
2. Partnership enshrined in Trust.
3. A future in which no Southern African community is left behind because the resources to build resilience arrived too little, too late.

Civil society and networks supporting this:

- 1. Southern Africa Region Climate Action Network**
- 2. CAN Zimbabwe**
- 3. PEOPLES FEDERATION FOR NATIONAL PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT (PEFENAP), Malawi**
- 4. Ambassadors Charity Trust (ACT)-Malawi**
- 5. Aid Life Learn Environment (ALLEN), DRC**
- 6. Hope Givers Foundation-Malawi**
- 7. Global Platform DRC**
- 8. Phaseout Fossil Fuels in DRC**
- 9. Pass NetZero (France; research partnerships in Namibia, Malawi, Botswana and Zambia)**
- 10. AIKA Alliance, Madagascar**
- 11. CAN Tanzania**
- 12. Ecoclimate vision, DRC**
- 13. Community Climate and Energy Shield Initiative (CCESI)-Uganda**
- 14. Sustainable Futures Initiative, Tanzania**
- 15. Citizens Network For Community Development Zambia**
- 16. Network of youth organizations engaged in climate change, biodiversity conservation, wetlands, and forests (DRC)**
- 17. Tshwane Youth Climate Action Network, South Africa**
- 18. Tshwaraganang Ma-Africa, South Africa**
- 19. Women Initiatives Lesotho, Lesotho**
- 20. Serenity Geography Association, Lesotho**

21. Lesotho Youth Climate Network, Lesotho

22. Advocates for Climate Justice South Africa

23. Tswelopele Climate Justice Foundation

24. Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute, SAFCEI