



Triggering Momentum on Supporting Loss and Damage in an Era of Weakening Commitment to Climate Justice

A Communiqué from the 5th African Regional Conference on Loss and Damage | March 27, 2026, Lilongwe, Malawi

I. PREAMBLE

The 5th African Regional Conference on Loss and Damage aimed to provide a platform for African stakeholders to develop strategies for advancing sustainable, equitable and just financing and technical support on loss and damage in Africa. It was convened in Lilongwe, Malawi, from March 25 to 27, 2026, and comprised participants from African governments, frontline communities, non-state actors¹, UN agencies and development partners. Following comprehensive in-person and virtual consultations, participants issued the following statement:

Aware that Africa must act decisively in response to several interlinked and rapidly evolving dynamics shaping the loss and damage discourse, particularly as recent climate negotiations have been weakened by geopolitical tensions and reduced leadership from major emitters, undermining ambition and accountability.

Perplexed by the lack of political will among developed countries to implement their agreed obligations to limit global warming to below 1.5°C as highlighted in the Paris agreement, noting that this failure disproportionately burdens African countries, which bear the most severe consequences despite contributing least to the historical emissions driving the climate crisis

Reflecting on the historical responsibilities and systemic financial inequities in global climate finance, where Africa faces structural barriers to accessing funds, with a disproportionate reliance on loans rather than grants.

Concerned about the critical financing gap and lack of political will, with current global commitments to Loss and Damage remaining grossly inadequate relative to the scale of need, and the slow mobilisation of resources reflecting a fundamental deficit in political will rather than resource availability.

Deeply concerned that less than one billion United States dollars has been mobilised for loss and damage in four years against an estimated annual need of USD 400–800 billion, and that only ten percent of climate finance reaches frontline communities, with children and youth receiving only 2.4% of climate financing.

¹ Women movements; Youth movements; Agriculture and food security; Labor movements & Trade Unions; Private sector; Indigenous people/ Local communities; Faith actors; Child and future generations; Health actors; Research & academia; National and International NGOs; Human rights and inclusivity organizations; Conservation & nature-based solutions organizations and Philanthropies



Disturbed by the centrality of debt-creating climate finance, including for adaptation and response to losses and damages, which continues to deepen the fiscal crises of African states.

Acknowledging the operationalisation of the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage (SNLD), and the Barbados Implementation Modality (BIM) for accessing funds in the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) as important milestones but noting that these remain too distant from frontline communities and the magnitude of resource needs.

Recognising that current frameworks inadequately capture losses and damages, including forgone opportunities for development such as investment in human capital, as well as the compounding effects of recurrent climate-induced disasters.

Fully aware that the existing global financial mechanisms and instruments, including the FRLD, remain complex, slow, inadequate and insufficiently responsive to the realities of vulnerable countries.

Concerned that there is no clear and agile roadmap on loss and damage post-Belém, and that this undermines the scaling of ambition on financing L&D, which has stagnated at COP28 Dubai levels.

Apprised of the landmark International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion of July 2025 that affirms binding state obligations under customary international law and invokes the law of state responsibility as important advances in the legal and institutional landscape.

Affirming that reparations, as defined in the UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation (2005), encompass restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-recurrence, and that the climate crisis is a structural injustice with identifiable responsible parties, who bear obligations of redress.

Acknowledging that loss and damage is not a humanitarian response but a matter of reparatory justice.

Inspired by the recent UN resolution recognising the transatlantic slave trade as the gravest crime against humanity, which reinforces that Africa's claim is not moral persuasion but a legal and political obligation.

Recognising that Africa is already doing more than its fair share, allocating scarce fiscal resources to climate action despite debt burdens, often at the expense of poverty alleviation and essential social programmes.

Leveraging on the Addis Ababa Declaration that frames loss and damage finance not as discretionary aid but as a legal and moral commitment owed by wealthy nations and calls for a reformed global finance system that delivers grant-based, predictable funding to climate-vulnerable countries.



Positioning to tap into the strategic window presented by Africa's hosting of COP32 to redefine global norms and centre loss and damage as a pillar of climate justice.

Keen to address weak coordination and capacity gaps, including limited research capacity at the national level, and to strengthen institutional arrangements and support decentralised implementation as an entry point to influence policy reform. Further recognising the need to close capacity gaps in evidence generation that deny the continent the opportunity to assemble robust assessments and documentation to demonstrate losses and damages for policy influence and scaled access to climate finance.

Conscious of progressive commitments and pronouncements to scale up development financing and further the global reform agenda as espoused in the Sevilla Pact, COP30 and COP16 outcomes, and G7 and G20 summit resolutions.





II. CALL TO ACTION

Headline messages:

1. Loss and Damage is an immediate crisis, not a future risk, and requires urgent intervention to save lives and livelihoods, calling for climate finance to be delivered at scale and with speed.
2. Secure a people-centred, rights-based, well-resourced and accessible L&D mechanisms and programmes that respond to Africa's disproportionate vulnerability, protects communities and upholds state's international obligations and climate law.
3. Urgently scale up grant-based loss and damage finance, increasing the volume, predictability and accessibility of L&D finance, in the form of grants and fully aligned with the polluter-pays principle.
4. Call for concerted action in building significant political momentum on the historical responsibility of developed country parties to urgently upscale loss and damage financing ahead of the replenishment window.
5. Assert that climate action must not be at the cost of human development, and that there is an urgent need to position L&D as a broader socioeconomic and fiscal crisis. Justice, equity and accountability must guide all L&D mechanisms.
6. Call on African leadership to centre climate debt cancellation in the pursuit of reparations under the coordinating leadership of the African Union Commission.
7. The Santiago Network for Loss and Damage must have sustainable, predictable and sufficient resources, including financial, technical and human resources, to enhance the capacity of developing countries to respond to loss and damage caused by the changing climate.





Specific asks on:

a. Scaled up and diversified loss and damage financing:

1. Developed countries must finance the FRLD in line with growing needs and in proportion to their historical responsibility for triggering the climate crisis. The BIM is a good start, but the current level of capitalisation of the FRLD is far below the current loss and damage needs of at least USD 400 billion to USD 800 billion annually.
2. FRLD should prioritise grants to avoid worsening the debt burden of climate-vulnerable countries, with finance that is accessible, transparent and participatory, and that places affected communities at the centre of decision-making.
3. African governments must develop guidelines for supporting streamlined collaborations and sector-wide mobilisation of climate finance to support loss and damage interventions.

b. Reforms in loss and damage governance mechanisms:

1. FRLD Board should fast-track the finalisation of direct access modalities to enhance accelerated access to L&D finance by communities and local organisations.
2. The FRLD policies should be driven by principles of equity, inclusivity, meaningful participation, accessibility and non-discrimination, delivering new and additional grant-based loss and damage finance that is timely, predictable and directly accessible to vulnerable communities, particularly women-rights organisations and Indigenous Peoples.
3. World leaders must fast track meaningful and recipient-led reform of global financing mechanisms, including the FRLD, to effectively operationalise L&D responses that are timely, accessible and fit-for-purpose, while reducing bureaucratic barriers and enhancing country ownership.
4. African governments must use the current call for proposals under the Barbados Implementation Modalities (BIM) to define governance discrepancies affecting readiness, post-disaster needs assessment and loss and damage quantification.
5. African Government must strengthen national L&D units and legal frameworks in every African country and strengthen inter-ministerial coordination to create enforceable platforms for community-level delivery.



c. Simplified financing pathways and access modalities for L&D finance:

1. Create and institutionalise proximate direct access mechanisms for communities to enable resources to reach affected populations at the last mile through simplified, decentralised and community-led delivery mechanisms.
2. FRLD and African Governments must scale community-based financing models and systems, such as Community Disaster Funds and community-owned mechanisms, as accredited delivery channels and grant formal recognition to them in national and global L&D frameworks.
3. FRLD must enable inclusive financing and decision-making processes that reflect the needs and priorities of children, youth and vulnerable groups.
4. FRLD and African Governments must speed up the localisation of accredited entities to access the Loss and Damage Fund, ensuring that the time taken in project approval reflects the urgency at the community level for effective last-mile delivery.

d. Technical capacity for assessing economic and non-economic L&D:

1. Santiago Network on Loss and Damage (SNLD) must deliver genuinely demand-driven, African-prioritised technical assistance by ensuring adequate resources are allocated and disbursed in a timely manner to effectively meet countries' technical capacity needs.
2. SNLD to invest in national and sub-national L&D assessment capacity, blending citizen science, Indigenous knowledge and scientific data.
3. SNLD must expedite the development of standardised, accessible post-disaster loss assessment methodologies and tools appropriate to the African context.
4. African governments must utilise existing climate change project monitoring tools to accommodate loss and damage work.

e. Catalysing the Santiago Network to provide demand-driven technical assistance to support inclusive L&D assessment and access to finance:

1. SNLD must have sustainable, predictable and sufficient resources, including financial, technical and human resources, while maintaining the Secretariat's cost-effectiveness, to enhance the capacity of developing countries to respond to loss and damage caused by the changing climate.
2. SNLD must prioritise engagements of local Organisations, Bodies, Networks and Experts (OBNEs) in delivering technical assistance to African countries.



f. Adaptation, resilience and Loss & Damage nexus issues:

1. Call for scaling up anticipatory and early action to minimise loss and damage under the leadership of national governments supported by climate finance.
2. New funding arrangements should be designed with flexibility to support and enhance pre-arranged funds in anticipation of climate-induced disasters and support anticipatory action where appropriate.
3. Call on the UNFCCC and affiliated bodies to recognize agroecology as a loss and damage response, not just an adaptation approach, and to integrate it as a financeable intervention within loss and damage and adaptation frameworks.
4. Demand that African governments embed gender-responsive and socially inclusive approaches across all L&D mechanisms, ensuring a holistic response to economic and non-economic losses, displacement, cultural erosion, loss of land and livelihood, and psychosocial harm, as priorities in their own right, not as afterthoughts.

g. Accelerating implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration in furthering the loss and damage agenda:

1. Secure Pan-African coordination and a concrete roadmap to COP32, anchoring the continent's priority actions, milestones and accountability mechanisms, with African negotiators providing leadership and governments, pan-African organisations and non-state actors providing the necessary political levers and global diplomatic leverage.
2. Call for aligning the loss and damage agenda with the broader and laudable African call for reform of the global financial architecture, including multilateral development banks, to ensure that it is responsive to Africa's climate realities and development needs.
3. Call on the African Union and Regional Economic Communities to establish a continental coordination mechanism on loss and damage, specifically focused on a shared data platform on loss and damage to consolidate the evidence needed for advancing climate justice and the special needs and circumstances of the continent. To this end, a Pan-African Loss and Damage Data Initiative to standardise methodologies, strengthen evidence-based advocacy and improve access to finance would go a long way.
4. Call on African governments to institutionalise loss and damage within development planning frameworks, including Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans.
5. In the spirit of the Addis Ababa Declaration, promote regional coordination and self-reliance in addressing loss and damage and ensure that frontline communities have direct access to loss and damage finance mechanisms.



6. Appeal for greater synchronisation of data and evidence on loss and damage at the regional level, with platforms for national focal points, researchers and African CSOs strengthened to deliver this.

h. Sustaining the reparations agenda:

1. Call on negotiators, under the work programme agreed in Belém at COP30, to act in good faith to ensure that finance under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement is treated as a binding obligation rooted in historical responsibility, not as a voluntary or diversified financing landscape.
2. We call on the Africa Group of Negotiators to reject loan-based climate finance, the substitution of public obligations with private finance, and the relabelling of existing financial flows, and instead demand new, grant-based, predictable and publicly funded climate finance. Call on African negotiators to advance an agenda item within the framework of COP31 and COP32 that will lead to explicit recognition of loss and damage finance as part of a broader reparatory justice framework.
3. We call on the COP32 Presidency, working alongside the COP30 Presidency, to deliver concrete outcomes on Africa's Special Needs and Circumstances in Addis Ababa, as a political claim rooted in historical injustice, beyond a mere technical classification.
4. Consolidate Africa-level development of jurisprudence, leveraging the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Advisory Opinion to sustain momentum on legal issues on loss and damage and other atrocities.

Commit to immediate action:

1. Adopt and launch a coordination mechanism for multi-stakeholder efforts for sustained continental and global advocacy on loss and damage, ensuring seamless and continuous influence in the process and the repositioning of the climate justice agenda.
2. Undertake to institute a fully pledged community of practice on loss and damage at the continental and country level to amplify grounded action across all African countries.
3. Together, we commit to systematic documentation of loss and damage cases across African jurisdictions, including non-economic losses and their implications for diverse populations, as the evidentiary foundation for advancing the loss and damage agenda, accountability and litigation.
4. We commit to remain intentional in fostering platforms and dialogues of influence that keep the loss and damage agenda high on the hierarchy of African priorities and within the framing of climate justice.