



**AFRICA
CLIMATE &
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Submission to the Climate High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership



**Launch of 2025 Work Programme: A Five-Year Vision for a Human-Centered Emotionally Resilient Global Climate Action
Agenda (GCAA)
(2025-2030)**

August 15th, 2025
Africa Climate and Environment Foundation (ACEF)

About Africa Climate and Environment Foundation (ACEF)

The Africa Climate and Environment Foundation (ACEF) is a non-governmental, youth-led organization dedicated to empowering grassroots African youth to take impactful action for the climate, environment, and sustainable development. We are driven by a mission to address the unique challenges facing African communities, which are among the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Our work is centered on five core pillars:

1. **Grassroots Mobilization:** We believe that the most effective climate action begins at the community level. ACEF works directly with local youth groups, providing them with the tools, knowledge, and resources they need to implement climate mitigation and adaptation projects that are relevant to their specific contexts.
2. **Bridging the Hunger and Poverty Gap:** Because climate change worsens food insecurity and poverty, our projects are designed to tackle both challenges together. We integrate climate-smart agriculture, sustainable resource management, and renewable energy to increase food production, create livelihoods, and strengthen resilience.
3. **Environmental Protection and Conservation:** We are committed to conserving Africa's rich natural heritage. Our work involves community-led initiatives for afforestation, watershed management, and biodiversity conservation, which are critical for both climate resilience and local livelihoods.
4. **Mitigating Climate Change:** While focusing on adaptation, we also empower youth to lead mitigation efforts in water, energy, agriculture, manufacturing, and transport sectors. We combine on-the-ground action with policy advocacy to make sure local solutions inform national and international strategies.
5. **Global Exposure and Advocacy:** We ensure the experiences of grassroots African youth are heard in global forums. By connecting local realities to international climate debates, we bring credibility, accountability, and fresh perspectives to global climate policy.

The Africa Climate and Environment Foundation is uniquely positioned to offer a vital perspective on the 2025 Work Programme for the Climate High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership. Our on-the-ground experience provides us with a critical understanding of the gaps that exist between global climate commitments and local realities. We see an urgent need for the Global Climate Action Agenda (GCAA) to shift from ambition to implementation, with a clear focus on empowering the most affected communities to lead the charge.

1. What should success look like for the GCAA in the next five years, and how can it be measured effectively?

Define Success Metrics and Timeline: The GCAA should adopt a clear set of outcome-based metrics that start with a 2025 baseline, include interim checkpoints in 2027–28, and set five-year targets for 2030. These metrics must track tangible improvements in people’s lives—such as reduced hunger and food insecurity, wider access to renewable energy for powering households and small businesses, greater productivity and incomes in local manufacturing, and more affordable and efficient transport. All indicators should be disaggregated by community, gender, and youth participation, and reported through regional monitoring hubs so that grassroots progress is visible, comparable, and time-bound.

Prioritize Audited Outcomes Over Pledges: Recognition and financing should no longer be tied to the number of pledges made but to the outcomes achieved. This means rewarding initiatives that demonstrate verifiable improvements in household food security, measured reductions in crop losses thanks to renewable storage systems, certified clean energy production in community mini-grids, or transport efficiency gains confirmed by real-time data. Verification reports should be publicly available and linked to the Global Climate Action Portal (GCAP), so communities and donors can clearly see which interventions are delivering results.

Set Quantified Food Security and Livelihood Targets: By 2030, the GCAA should commit to reducing climate-driven moderate-to-severe food insecurity among targeted populations by at least 35%. Participating programs should also demonstrate rising household incomes for farmers and small-scale processors within three years. Clean energy targets, such as solar irrigation or cold storage, should be directly linked to improved yields and markets, while transport upgrades must demonstrate reduced costs and time for producers to access markets.

Commit Specific Mitigation and Sequestration Targets: The GCAA should require interventions to show at least a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas intensity per tonne of staple crops by 2030, along with contributions to global soil carbon sequestration targets through agroforestry, regenerative agriculture, and reduced tillage. These targets must be achieved without undermining food security and should include measurable avoided diesel use from renewable pumps and processors, as well as emission reductions in transport per tonne-kilometre.

Institutionalize Inclusion and Leadership Quotas: By 2028, at least 60% of GCAA-verified initiatives should be led or co-led by Global South actors, and by 2027, youth and women should hold at least 50% of leadership positions in regional fora. Leadership composition should be a requirement for access to visibility and finance, ensuring that grassroots priorities, like food security, household energy access, and local processing, are designed and managed by those directly affected.

Strengthen Integrity Through Conflict-of-Interest Rules: The UNFCCC should adopt a binding conflict-of-interest policy by 2026, with mandatory disclosures for all actors. The GCAP should include public safeguards to prevent industries with vested interests from influencing renewable energy or food security programs. A transparent COI registry will protect community-based projects from greenwashing and ensure credibility in global reporting.

Tie Finance to Verified Milestones and Transparency: A dedicated Finance and Market Access Platform should disburse funding in stages, releasing resources only when independently verified milestones are achieved, such as documented reductions in seasonal hunger or the operational success of renewable energy systems. This approach ensures that communities benefit directly while also building trust with donors.

Enforce Accountability Through a Multi-Tiered System: The GCAA should create a public accountability system with clear consequences for non-performance, including remediation requirements, suspension, or delisting. Communities should have access to grievance mechanisms, and an annual Progress and Integrity Report should highlight both achievements and failures, ensuring credibility and fairness.

Roll Out Pilots, Scale Monitoring Hubs, and Protect Data: In 2026, the GCAA should launch pilot-verified landscapes with youth-led data collection teams tracking food security, soil carbon, renewable energy use, and transport efficiency. Within three years, these pilots should expand to several regions, with independent third-party verification. Data must be collected and used responsibly, protecting community privacy while providing confidence to investors and donors.

Link Visibility and Finance to Verification and Safeguards: Large-scale funding and high-profile visibility must be reserved for initiatives that meet rigorous standards of verification, inclusivity, and safeguards. This will ensure that only projects with proven benefits for communities, such as improved food security, renewable energy access, or sustainable livelihoods, are showcased on the global stage.

2. How can the GCAA facilitate direct and impactful engagement between Parties and NPS to support implementation efforts at both national and sectoral levels, in order to advance the full delivery of the GST, NDCs, and NAPs?

According to the United Nations Climate Change (UNCC), the Global Climate Action Agenda (GCAA) is an agenda that requires the involvement of Parties and Non-Parties stakeholders (NPS), which includes civil society, NGOs, indigenous peoples, private and public organizations, youth, and academia. The GCAA has a crucial role to play in bridging the gap between national governments and non-Party stakeholders. Currently, many grassroots initiatives, particularly in Africa, operate in isolation from national climate policy frameworks due to a lack of formal channels for engagement. To make this engagement more impactful, the GCAA must transition from being a passive database to an active facilitator of collaboration. Proposed action to facilitate engagement include:

Promote Public-Private Partnership: One effective way the GCAA can facilitate impactful engagement between Parties and NPS is through public-private partnerships (PPPs) that bridge political commitments with practical implementation. For example, in the Global South, where financing gaps and infrastructure challenges persist, PPPs can unlock investment in clean energy and sustainable development. By fostering collaboration between governments, development banks, and private sector innovators, the GCAA could help accelerate renewable energy deployment, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and contribute directly to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

Promote Open Science and Innovative Financing Mechanisms: The GCAA can promote open science and innovative financing mechanisms, such as green bonds, to support transparent, inclusive, and evidence-based climate action. On the one hand, open science will enhance data sharing, capacity building, and co-creation of knowledge between Parties and NPS, especially in the Global South, in order to ensure that climate strategies are informed by the best available evidence and accessible to all. On the other hand, green bonds will fill the financing gaps by creating a channel for private capital towards renewable energy projects and climate-resilient infrastructure. Doing this will create a direct connection between open science and green finance, which can strengthen GCAA accountability and investment flows for reliable GST outputs.

Establish a National-to-Local Dialogue Platform: the GCAA should support the creation of formal, periodic dialogue platforms within each country, from national to local level. These platforms would bring together national policymakers, sectoral experts, and representatives from grassroots communities, who often face the brunt of climate impacts while contributing the least to greenhouse gas emissions, with the explicit goal of co-designing and co-implementing NDCs and NAPs. By creating inclusive platforms for dialogue and integrating traditional knowledge systems into policy design, the GCAA can help bridge the gap between global negotiations and local realities.

Create an "NDC Implementation Matchmaking" Service: A dedicated GCAA service could act as a matchmaker, identifying specific, actionable climate projects from grassroots and youth-led organizations and connecting them with national governments seeking to fulfill their NDC targets. This service would help governments find local partners and enable grassroots groups to access national funding and support.

Organize Sectoral and Regional Workshops: In addition to global forums, the GCAA should organize smaller, more focused workshops. For example, a "Youth-Led Agriculture Innovation Workshop for African NDCs" could bring together African youth farmers, agricultural policymakers, and financial institutions to develop concrete, fundable projects that address both food security and climate goals. This targeted approach will produce more tangible outcomes.

By enabling these multi-dimensional forms of engagement between Parties and NPS, the GCAA can help unlock the full potential of non-Parties Stakeholders in achieving climate resilience and lowering the global temperature to well below 1.5°C before 2030.

3. How can the CGAA promote an inclusive and equitable engagement, in particular from underrepresented groups and regions?

Equitable engagement is not merely a matter of fairness but a strategic necessity. From our experience working with youths in grassroots communities across Africa, the most impactful and innovative climate solutions often come from the communities most affected by climate change. However, these groups frequently face systemic barriers to participation, including a lack of resources, language barriers, and limited access to international forums. The GCAA must proactively dismantle these barriers by:

Establishing a Permanent Youth and Grassroots Advisory Body: The GCAA could create a formal advisory body within the Marrakech Partnership with a majority representation from youth and grassroots organizations from the Global South. This body would not be consultative but would have the mandate to co-create the GCAA's strategic plan, approve funding streams, and set the agenda for

key thematic discussions. This ensures that youth from underrepresented regions are not just participants but decision-makers.

Regionalizing and Decentralizing GCAA Activities: The GCAA should acknowledge imbalances and disparities by first understanding that some groups have been left out in the past, which can lead to distrust in governments or official processes. The GCAA must work to identify the specific challenges faced by different underrepresented groups (especially youth), such as language barriers, distance from resources, lack of access to technology, or socio-economic issues. To overcome the barriers of travel and language, the GCAA should significantly decentralize its activities by hosting regional GCAA hubs, particularly in Africa, that can serve as centers for capacity building, networking, and information dissemination; conducting local and regional workshops in collaboration with local organizations; and providing financial and logistical support for the participation of grassroots representatives in international events.

Establish a Dedicated "Equity and Justice Fund": The GCAA should create a ring-fenced fund specifically to support the participation and project implementation of underrepresented groups. This fund should have simplified application processes and be managed with the guidance of the Youth and Grassroots Advisory Body.

Integrate a Climate Justice and Human Rights Framework: The GCAA must go beyond a simple focus on emissions reductions and resilience. All GCAA-aligned initiatives should be required to demonstrate how they uphold human rights, promote gender equality, and ensure a just transition for workers and communities. The GCAA should be updated with a dedicated section to report on these cross-cutting issues.

4. What improvements can be made to ensure better transparency, reporting, and follow-up of the GCAA, including in existing tools such as the Global Climate Action Portal (a.k.a NAZCA) and the Yearbook of Global Climate Action?

Simplify and Localize Reporting Systems. Many grassroots groups, like the grassroots communities ACEF works with across Africa lack advanced technical or digital capacities. If the Global Climate Action Portal (NAZCA) continues to use complicated reporting formats, these actors remain invisible. A simplified system with clear, step-by-step guidance would ensure that small-scale but impactful actions are recognized. Localization would also mean allowing reporting in widely spoken languages to break language barriers. This could be through written format, audio and sign language enhancement.

Provide Verification Pathways that Do Not Exclude Grassroots Actors: Verification of climate action is critical for credibility, but many local initiatives cannot afford costly third-party audits. For the Global South, verification should combine community-driven monitoring, recognition of traditional knowledge, and government–civil society collaboration. For example, local farmers and traditional elders in ACEF’s work already keep records of agricultural initiatives or cultural practices; such systems could be acknowledged as valid verification pathways. This builds trust without placing a heavy financial burden on local groups.

Ensure Equity in Visibility of Climate Action: Global reporting systems often highlight large corporate or city initiatives, overshadowing community-based work. Yet in Africa, grassroots projects often have

greater social and cultural impact. By restructuring the Global Climate Action Yearbook to equally value smaller initiatives, the platform can reflect the reality of climate action in the Global South. This means that a bee farm run by 60 women in a village in Cameroon, Kenya or Ghana should not be hidden under the shadow of a multinational renewable energy company's pledge. Equity in visibility motivates grassroots actors and strengthens trust in global processes.

Link Local Actions with Global Tracking Frameworks: Communities rarely understand how their actions connect to the Paris Agreement, Global Stock take, or SDGs. Without this link, reporting feels disconnected. Global tools should explicitly explain and demonstrate how local work, like fish farming for food security or ocean literacy for children, contributes to achieving climate goals. When grassroots groups see their efforts reflected in these larger frameworks, it builds ownership and commitment. This is vital in Africa, where many actors feel excluded from global reporting structures.

Address Capacity and Resource Gaps in the Global South: Transparency and reporting are not just about tools, they require technical capacity. In ACEF's work, communities often lack internet access, technical skills, or funding to document and share progress. Therefore, any improvements to GCAA should include dedicated training programs, low-cost digital tools (like offline-friendly mobile reporting apps), and financial support for monitoring. This ensures that communities are not excluded simply because they lack resources, and it creates a fairer global climate action system.

Promote Accountability that Respects Local Realities: Follow-up mechanisms should not only focus on whether a target was met, but also consider the challenges communities face. For example, coffee farm yields may fail in a given year due to extreme weather, not lack of commitment. Accountability should therefore include a learning-oriented approach that documents barriers and provides corrective support. This creates an environment where reporting is honest, not punitive, and where Global South actors feel encouraged rather than pressured to exaggerate success.

Embed Inclusivity in Reporting and Yearbook Processes: For Africa, inclusivity means acknowledging youth, women, and Indigenous groups who are often the backbone of local climate action. If reporting systems remain top-down, these groups will remain invisible. By embedding inclusivity, such as requiring disaggregated reporting by gender, youth, or community type, the Yearbook can reflect the true diversity of climate action. This aligns with ACEF's commitment to amplifying marginalized voices in conservation and climate governance.

Conclusion

The Africa Climate and Environment Foundation firmly believes that the 2025 Work Programme for the Climate High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership represents a pivotal opportunity to infuse the global climate agenda with a new sense of urgency, equity, and a focus on grassroots action. The success of the Paris Agreement hinges on its ability to support and empower a truly diverse range of actors, moving beyond the traditional high-level stakeholders to include the communities that are both the most vulnerable to climate change and the source of its most innovative solutions.

By implementing the recommendations outlined in this submission such as creating direct engagement channels between Parties and grassroots groups and enhancing the transparency of reporting tools, the GCAA can cement its legacy as a transformative force. We are eager to continue our collaboration with the Climate High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership to ensure that the vision of a net-zero, resilient, and equitable world is built from the ground up, with the

leadership and ingenuity of African youth at its core. We are confident that together, we can achieve the ambitious goals set for the coming five years and beyond.

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