

Rwanda Climate Change and Development Network (RCCDN) Position Paper for COP 28 submitted to the Government of Rwanda as Party to UNFCCC

RCCDN being a network comprised of 73 local NGOs, is deeply concerned about the impacts of the climate crisis in our country and its people. We are witnessing the devastating effects of climate-fuelled droughts, floods, food insecurity, and displacement. We are also aware of the historical and current responsibilities of the developed countries in causing and exacerbating this crisis and, in defiance to science and climate justice, their failure to provide adequate support to the most vulnerable countries and communities. We have been steadfast in advocating for a fair, ecologically-just and equitable transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future that respects the rights and dignity of all people.

To this end, RCCDN hereby outlined a set of demands or redlines that it expects the Rwandan Government to uphold and champion at the COP 28:

1. Call on the Government of Rwanda to influence negotiations at COP 28 to consider agriculture as an important sector that is key in building sustainable community resilience to climate change and ensuring food security

Drawing on the IPCC report that aptly points to the need for changes in the manner in which we undertake agriculture and offers a useful thought to the framing – a shift from commercial to agroecology-based production systems, a framing that is consistent with the AU Climate Change Response Strategy 2022 – 2032 that aspires for Climate Resilient production systems, driven by people-centered nature-based solutions to climate change;

Informed by the implementation of Rwanda’s agricultural sector blueprints, notably the Agriculture policy and PSTA IV, and the critical pillars that anchor climate action in agriculture in these policy frameworks;

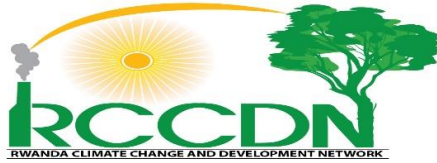
Owing to agriculture contribution to National GDP of about 25% and 77% of the Rwandan population depending on agriculture;

and recalling that previous efforts in reforming Rwandan agriculture as informed by externalized ‘revolutionary’ approaches have been largely unsuccessful in transforming the sector,

In the light of the above, RCCDN calls upon Rwandan Government, to prioritize locally-led adaptation in agriculture and related sectors by taking the following actions:

a) Advocating for the finalization of the framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation under the Paris Agreement. This will enhance communities’ adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience, and reduce vulnerability to climate change. The impact of these efforts should be measurable, reportable, and verifiable.

b) Prioritizing greater decentralization and locally led climate actions in the agriculture sector, which centers the interests of smallholder farmers including women, youth, people with disability, and other frontline communities affected by the climate crisis. This would involve adopting the principles of Locally



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Led Climate Adaptation, especially in terms of devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level and investing in local capabilities.

c) Parties must agree on innovative/alternative sources of grant-based finance that can generate new and additional resources for climate action and adaptation in Agriculture. The approach to mobilize such finance must be rooted in the principle of ‘polluter pays’ and UNFCCC’s foundational principles of equity, justice, fairness, and access.

d) Rwandan Government must prioritize the adaptation agenda in agriculture and amplify its voice to ensure that agriculture is recognized as critical to the adaptation agenda. This should be highlighted in COP28 and in subsequent UNFCCC processes.

e) Ensure greater implementation of climate action in the agriculture sector, there is a need of increasing finance, strengthening early warning systems, promoting community led research, as well as building resilient infrastructure in agriculture including but not limited to irrigation and postharvest handling facilities.

f) We advocate for technological transfers in agriculture that supports local initiatives and co-creates innovations with farmers in their local settings for relevance and practical applicability. This will strengthen local ownership and benefits for farmers, advance low-carbon transitions, including agroecology, and enhance value addition and market access

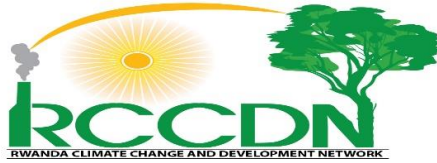
g) At COP28, global north countries should be urged to repurpose global food subsidies to major commercial producers for agroecology, food systems, and market reforms and make these funds available to smallholder farmers to advance sustainable systems of food production.

2. Reject false solutions and narratives that undermine communities' rights, interests and sovereignty, such as carbon markets and the deceitful principle of shared responsibilities.

We caution the Government of Rwanda that some proposals or actions claim to address the climate crisis. In reality, they either have no significant impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions or, worse, have negative social and environmental consequences. These proposals are promoted by powerful interests that benefit from maintaining the status quo of fossil fuel dependence, and they divert attention and resources from the real solutions that are urgently needed. In this regard, we demand that African leaders and stakeholders must:

a) Critically examine the claims and evidence behind any proposed solution. They must make it a duty to the communities to ask questions such as: Who is promoting it and why? What are the assumptions and uncertainties involved? How does it affect the root causes and drivers of greenhouse gas emissions? What are the potential trade-offs and co-benefits for other environmental and social issues? Are they science-based or do they align with the principles of climate justice and human rights?

b) Press for and uphold transparent and participatory decision-making processes involving diverse stakeholders and perspectives; ensuring that the voices of those most affected by climate change and its



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solutions are heard and respected; and supporting the development and implementation of solutions that are based on sound science, local knowledge, and community empowerment.

c) Show courage in confronting the systemic changes needed to address climate change effectively, recognising that false climate solutions often serve to maintain the status quo and protect the interests of powerful actors who benefit from the current system.

d) Challenge the dominant narratives and paradigms that enable and justify false solutions, such as those denying historical responsibilities for the climate crisis, turning regional and global dialogues into investment forums, claiming equal or shared responsibility for climate action and dismissing African demands for justice as victim-playing.

3. Commit to a just and equitable transition to renewable energy, ensuring that energy access is prioritised for the poor and marginalised and that community ownership and participation are guaranteed.

RCCDN reiterates that just energy transition (JET) must be localised. We recognise that different countries and groups of people have different needs, capacities and aspirations in energy and that these must be considered in the design and implementation of energy policies and projects. We, therefore, demand that the COP 28 upholds the following JET principles:

a) Recognizing the diversity and heterogeneity of countries and regions and respecting their sovereignty and self-determination in defining their energy pathways.

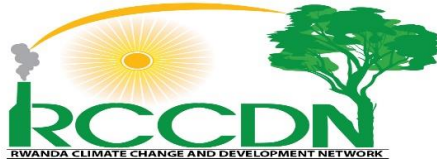
b) Ensuring that the energy transition is aligned with the Rwandan vision 2050, African Union Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement and contributes to poverty eradication, social justice, human development and sustainable industrialization.

c) Promoting a participatory and inclusive approach that engages all relevant actors, especially women, youth and other marginalised groups, in designing, implementing and monitoring the energy transition policies and projects.

d) Supporting the development of local capacities, skills and innovations and fostering regional cooperation and integration to enhance the competitiveness and resilience of Rwandan economy in the global energy market.

e) Balancing the trade-offs and synergies between environmental, social and economic objectives and ensuring that the costs and benefits of the energy transition are equitably distributed among and within countries.

f) Enhancing the access, affordability, and reliability of modern energy services for all Rwandans, especially those living in rural and peri-urban areas, and prioritizing decentralized, community owned and managed renewable energy solutions.



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g) Strengthening the governance, transparency and accountability mechanisms at all levels and ensuring that evidence-based decision-making, human rights standards and the rule of law guide the energy transition.

4. Demand that developed countries fulfil their historical responsibility and provide adequate and predictable finance, technology transfer, and capacity building to support adaptation, mitigation, and loss and damage in Africa.

RCCDN demands that the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities must continue to guide global climate action and underpin the common Rwandan position. The establishment of new funding arrangements for loss and damage is a welcome development. However, a mechanism that ensures climate justice is very critical.

For this reason, we call on the Government to uphold the following priorities for Rwanda in its decisions and engagement with global and regional stakeholders.

a) Securing adequate, flexible, and predictable needs-based finance for adaptation, loss and damage and mitigation actions, especially from developed countries with historical responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions. Such finance must be primarily public-sourced, new and additionally to official development assistance and in the form of grants and other non-loan instruments. The Rwandan government must aim to lay a foundation that will rally for the conclusion of the discussions on the New Collective and Quantified Goal on climate finance during the COP28 in Dubai.

b) Working to complete and adopt the framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation at COP 28. The Government of Rwanda must press for increasing adaptation finance to Rwanda by more than double and ensuring it is needs-based and reaches communities at the forefront of the climate crisis.

c) Enhancing access to transferred and homegrown technology and capacity building to enable Rwanda to implement low-carbon development strategies and cope with climate risks.

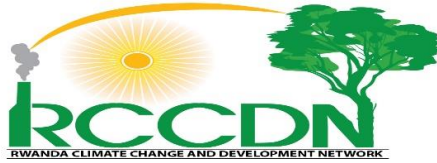
d) Promoting equity and justice in the allocation of emission reduction targets and the distribution of climate benefits, considering the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

e) Supporting regional cooperation and integration to foster collective action and leverage synergies among African countries on climate issues.

f) The availability and access of finances under the loss and damage fund have to be distinct from the other funds whose accessibility has not been favouring the vulnerable populations on the climate crisis frontline

5. Demanding that developed countries honour their commitments on climate financing

The issue of the climate adaptation finance gap is becoming increasingly significant. The amount of funds allocated for this purpose is estimated to be much lower than what is required to prepare low-income



countries for the fast-paced climate impacts. Experts believe that the current adaptation finance falls at least 5-10 times short of the actual amount needed to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change. There is also a huge disparity between mitigation and adaptation finance, with country-allocable global mitigation finance (US\$4.8 billion) being double that of global adaptation finance (US\$2.5 billion) in 2021. Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) have played a leading role in creating this disparity. Collectively they committed a total of \$66.05 billion in 2020. However, 76 percent of this funding was allocated towards mitigation efforts, while the remaining 24 percent was earmarked for adaptation. This has resulted in an undesirable imbalance between the financing of these two vital areas.

Countries that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and are already struggling with protracted crises have only received an average of \$1 per person from multilateral climate funds between the years 2003 and 2020. This inadequate funding is a cause of concern as these countries face some of the most severe consequences of climate change, including droughts, floods, and extreme weather events, which exacerbate ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises. The need of the hour is to ensure that these countries receive sufficient funds to develop and implement adaptation and mitigation strategies to address the impacts of climate change and build resilience in their communities.

At the 27th Conference of Parties (COP27), a call was made to MDBs to facilitate easier access to climate finance. The intention behind this call is to make it simpler for countries to receive the necessary funds for their climate action plans. This will be important as countries around the world continue to work towards reducing their carbon footprint and alleviating the impacts of climate change.

Private finance can be a valuable contributor to climate action, but it should not be viewed as a substitute for public finance. While private finance can bring innovative financial instruments, expertise, and resources to the table, it can also be subject to market risks and may not address the needs of vulnerable communities. Public finance, on the other hand, is critical for stimulating investment in areas of the economy that may not attract private investment, such as renewable energy infrastructure or adaptation projects in developing countries. It is important to strike a balance between private and public finance to ensure that climate action is effective, efficient, and equitable

As a result of the above, RCCDN calls on the Government of Rwanda to influence COP 28 negotiations to deliver the following on climate finance:

- a) To prioritize grant financing over debt financing to support sustainable development and climate change: Instead of financing projects through loans, financial institutions should provide grants to support sustainable development and climate change, which would not require repayment and would be more accessible to communities in need
- b) Follow through on the call by Parties to UNFCCC at COP27 to MDBs and their shareholders to reform their practices and priorities to sustainably increase climate finance
- c) Reject the proposal raised by the US government at the Loss and Damage (L&D) transitional committee meeting to present the World Bank as the host of the loss and damage fund. If adopted, this proposal



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would limit access to L&D funding and burden communities in the Global South with debt-creating financial mechanisms.

d) Work with developed countries to restore and strengthen global accountability between MDBs and national governments to ensure that financing is being used for sustainable development and climate change

e) Develop reporting rules on climate finance to avoid inflated claims and double counting

f) Channel finance directly to national and subnational governments and local actors consistent with the principles of locally-led action to ensure that communities have direct access to funding

g) Accelerate negotiations on a New Collective and Quantified Finance Goal, which should pave the way for predictable, adequate, and flexible climate finance to vulnerable countries and communities

h) Align with an effort to reach urgent conclusions on the modalities of operationalizing the loss and damage facility

i) The loss and damage fund should be grant-based, locally-led, broad-based, and adopt a whole society approach. Additionally, it should be gender responsive and accessible to communities at the frontline of the climate crisis.