



ADVANCING THE ROLE OF THE YOUTH IN JUST TRANSITION FOR A JUST CLIMATE RESILIENT FUTURE

FOUNDING A SPACE FOR THE AFRICAN YOUTH IN AFRICA'S JUST TRANSITION FRAMEWORK.

VENUE: SAL ISLAND, CABO VERDE

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Background

The recognition and appreciation of Africa's vibrant youth demographic is beyond rhetoric. The role of youth in Africa's development agenda gained traction with the Africa Union (AU) Constitutive Act which expressly took cognizance of youth as important partners to strengthen solidarity and cohesion among "our people" through specific activities and engagements. Further, the African Union Commission's (AUC) strategic plan 2004 - 2007 prioritized youth development and empowerment with a further strengthening from the Africa Development Agenda 2063 aspiration 6 wherein Africa aspires that her development will be people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children¹. The Africa Youth Charter (AYC), adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments in Banjul, The Gambia, in 2006, crystallized the recognition of young men and women in Africa's development by providing a continental framework with provisions on youth: rights, duties and freedoms; active participation in the continent's development at all levels; guidelines and responsibilities of Member States to promote empowerment; and, responsibilities to contribute to national, regional and continental development.

Specifically, the role of youth in promoting climate resilience through taking an active role in just transition for accelerated implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions² and Sustainable Development Goals (global goals)³ in Africa is increasingly overdue and vital. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and UNFCCC, much of Africa has already warmed by more than 1 °C since 1901, with an increase in heat waves and hot days. A reduction in precipitation is likely over northern and the south-western parts by the end of the century. Similarly, increasing temperatures and sea levels, changing precipitation patterns and more extreme weather are threatening human health and safety, food and water security and socio-economic development in the continent and its regions. Most devastatingly, climate induced migration and conflicts have seen influx into cities like Nairobi, Abuja and Bangui with results expressing themselves in the form of increased city populations, increased pressure on urban resources, urban sprawl, slums and informal settlements upsurge and increased vehicular emissions. The "leave no one behind" principle in climate action and advocacy is therefore not only eminent in the continent but also needed very urgently if serious and radical actions have to be taken to combat the impacts of climate change; currently streaming to climate crisis especially amongst the youth.

¹ https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-01_background_note.pdf

² <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs/nationally-determined-contributions-ndcs>

³ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>



Justification for Advancing the Role of the Youth in Just Transition for a Just Climate Resilient Future

Tomorrow's world cannot be imagined without a just transition to a carbon-neutral society. While there is no universally accepted definition of "just transition" several definitions have been fronted by institutions including ILO, as the transformation of economies and societies toward environmental sustainability, decarbonization, climate change adaptation, eradication of poverty, decent work, social inclusion, justice, and equity⁴. However, according to a working group convened by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung – Kenya Office (consisting of PACJA, KPCG, CEJAD, TI-K, COTU, and Y4SDGs, just transition are a set elements and principles to facilitate and shape the shift (transition) of communities and societies from a carbon intensive economies to low carbon resilient economies.

Transitioning to a low-carbon economy will affect youth in particular because their future and livelihoods are at stake and because they are the workforce of the future and will experience unique struggles and opportunities. Addressing the issues faced by youth in a just transition includes equipping young people with the capacity to be involved in decision-making, keeping processes youth-centered and powered by youth, and guaranteeing their right to participation in international and national processes. With COVID-19 currently pushing millions of people – especially the African youth - into poverty, highlighting and amplifying existing vulnerabilities in economies, food systems, and healthcare will be very important to advancing the inclusion of the youth in the broader discussion of just transition. Even so, the pandemic also offers an opportunity to "build forth better" and focus on a green recovery that integrates elements of just transition, tackling both the health crisis and the climate crisis through a people-centered approach.

However, just transition will affect every sector of the world's economies and societies and have far-reaching consequences. Sectors such as construction, industry, waste management, transportation, tourism, or fashion – majorly dominated by the youth - will have to undergo a large-scale transformation to become climate-friendly, sustainable, and equitable, while other areas such as urban settlements will need to reduce emissions and become more resilient at the same time. In particular in developing continents – like Africa, most of these sectors have high percentages of family labor as well as informal and migrant workers. For a truly imagined just transition, it is imperative to include the youth's needs, create safety nets and alternative livelihoods, and listen to the youth's voices directly – hence the need to conduct host a youth side event during the 9th CCDA to deliberate on advancing the role of the youth in just transition for a just climate resilient future with a broader objective of founding a space for the African youth in Africa's just transition framework

Objectives of the assignment

The main objective of the assignment will be to underscore the critical need for involvement of the youth in just transition while highlighting key sectors and institutions for youth engagement in the just transition dialogue for accelerated realization of climate resilience in Africa.



To achieve the above main objective, the assignment will rely on the following specific objectives;

- Map out sector opportunities for youth involvement in the African just transition framework for climate resilience in the continent.
- Review and identify opportunities and gaps in policies and legislative instruments (in such sectors mentioned in I above) both supporting and or hindering the involvement of youth in just transition for climate resilience in Africa
- Provide recommendations and communicate for state and non-state actors on the appropriate mechanisms for ensuring youth participation in just transition accelerated implementation of African countries' NDCs.