

Joint Statement of Civil Society Organizations from Africa and Europe on the Occasion of the AU-EU Foreign Ministers Meeting – 21 May 2025

Summary for decision-makers

African and European civil society organizations urge the AU-EU Foreign Ministers Meeting to deliver a bold, equitable roadmap for climate justice, energy transition, and green industrialisation. Ministers must commit to enhanced 1.5°C-aligned NDCs, scaled-up adaptation and loss and damage support, and accelerated implementation of SDG7 and the COP28 global energy targets—tripling renewables, doubling energy efficiency, and transitioning away from fossil fuels.

We call on the AU and EU to:

- 1. commit to delivering on the Paris Agreement, SDG7, and global energy goals by scaling up renewables, doubling energy efficiency, phasing out fossil fuels, and advancing just, inclusive, and locally driven energy transitions aligned with national priorities;*
- 2. commit to urgently reforming the global financial and economic systems, prioritizing fair access to funding and debt justice for African countries, implementing recommendations for debt relief, and unlocking affordable financing for clean energy projects;*
- 3. commit to a fossil-free future by ending public support for fossil fuel investments, redirecting funds toward renewable energy, regulating the private sector to align with the Paris Agreement, and halting the promotion of fossil gas, including LNG as a transition fuel;*
- 4. commit to significantly increasing support for adaptation and loss and damage in Africa by boosting grant-based funding for climate resilience sectors, aligning initiatives with African priorities, and ensuring predictable funding for the Loss and Damage Fund;*
- 5. commit to transforming African economies through green industrialization by promoting local manufacturing, skills development, technology transfer, and fair value chain participation, ensuring Africa benefits from its natural resources, drives green jobs, and leads the global energy transition.*

Full Statement

As civil society organizations from Africa and Europe, we welcome the upcoming AU-EU Foreign Ministers Meeting as a crucial opportunity to reaffirm a just and transformative partnership between our continents. We urge ministers to clearly commit to strengthening multilateralism through ambitious climate action — including enhanced efforts to achieve the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement. This must involve the development and timely submission of ambitious third-generation Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) before the UN Summit of the Future in September, alongside scaled-up adaptation efforts, meaningful progress on addressing loss and damage, and the delivery of SDG 7: ensuring universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable energy by 2030. Ministers must also commit to implementing the global energy targets agreed at COP28: tripling renewable energy capacity, doubling energy efficiency by 2030, and transitioning away from fossil fuels by 2050. An equitable approach to the fossil fuel phase out demands that the EU phase out coal by 2030, gas by 2035, and oil by 2040, reflecting its greater historical responsibility and capacity, while recognizing and supporting the leadership of African countries, whose energy systems already feature significant shares of renewables and who require international support to expand clean energy access without replicating fossil-dependent pathways.

We acknowledge the EU's stated ambitions—particularly those outlined in the Global Gateway strategy—to support Africa's green transition. However, we are concerned that this partnership is becoming overly eurocentric and export-oriented, and does not respond sufficiently to climate impacts. Africa must not remain a mere supplier of resources for Europe's energy transition. Local value creation, resilient infrastructure, transformation of local economies, and energy access for all must be at the heart of all energy investments. Support for adaptation, particularly locally led approaches, and to address loss and damage must also be scaled up.

The AU-EU Foreign Ministers Meeting, including its roundtables on “multilateralism” and on “prosperity” are a vital opportunity to reflect on how the AU and EU can defend and strengthen international climate cooperation, and accelerate the socio-economic benefits in the intersections between energy, infrastructure, climate, and digital transformation. We call for meaningful dialogue during this session around the implementation of SDG 7 and the global energy goals, with a strong emphasis on justice, inclusion, resilience and sustainability. It is essential that these discussions move beyond extractive investment models and embrace approaches that foster African ownership, skills development, and technology transfer.

Our Expectations for the Meeting's Communiqué:

The AU and EU must commit to delivering on the Paris Agreement, Agenda 2030/SDG7 and Global Energy Goals: Member states of both blocks are critical signatories to the Paris Agreement, and have committed to put 1.5°C aligned NDCs on the table. Committing to deliver enhanced NDCs integrated with economy wide just transition policies and plans can ensure that decarbonization strategies create decent work, protect labour and Indigenous rights, promote gender justice, and address social and environmental impacts. The communiqué must explicitly endorse the global goals of tripling renewable energy capacity, doubling energy efficiency, and transitioning away from fossil fuels, while ensuring alignment with national and regional development priorities in Africa. The EU and AU must jointly prioritize the rapid and ambitious scaling-up of renewable energy to enable a swift transition away from fossil fuels and tackle the devastating energy poverty that continues to affect much of the African continent. This must be done in full alignment with the SDGs and the principle of a just transition. Furthermore, both the EU and AU must prioritize decentralized, community-based energy solutions that build local capacity and resilience within African societies. At the same time, energy efficiency must be recognized as a critical enabler of this transition, with the EU reducing existing energy demand: the greater the efficiency gains, the lower the demand for new energy, and the faster the phase-out of fossil fuels.

The AU and EU must highlight the importance of an urgent reform of global financial and economic systems to ensure equitable and effective climate action, prioritizing fair access to funding and debt justice for African countries: A key precondition for the necessary investments in sustainable development and clean energy is coordinated and unconditional debt relief by all creditors, especially for highly vulnerable economies. This is essential for enabling Global South countries to meet the 2030 Agenda, uphold the Paris Agreement, and fulfil human rights obligations. The EU and AU should commit to supporting and implementing recommendations from expert bodies such as the Expert Review on Debt, Nature and Climate (co-led by Kenya), the Debt Jubilee Commission, and the African Expert Panel on Cost of Capital (led by South Africa). These recommendations—though still being consolidated—already offer valuable proposals for delivering short-term debt relief. Structural reform must include a UN Framework

Convention on Sovereign Debt to fix persistent flaws in the global debt architecture and ensure timely, fair crisis resolution.

Simultaneously, access to finance and renewable energy technologies remains a major barrier—particularly for African communities and small enterprises. The distorted cost of capital, with much higher interest rates in developing countries, and concentration of renewable energy technologies in developed countries hinders a just energy transition. Funding and technology transfer mechanisms must enable direct, affordable access, especially for small- and medium-scale projects. This requires more grants and concessional finance, better risk mitigation, and the removal of non-tariff trade barriers, geopolitical or commercial conditionalities. Crucially, this also requires comprehensive regulatory reforms on the ground to reduce investment risk and build investor confidence. The financial power of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the technological capacity of the EU member states should be strategically deployed to support these reforms and to unlock greater investment in Africa's clean energy future.

The New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) adopted at COP29 calls for the scaling up of financing to developing country Parties to at least USD 1.3 trillion per year by 2035 with developed countries leading on a goal of at least USD 300 billion per year. A linear pathway from the current USD 100 billion implies contributions must double by 2030 and triple by 2035. EU budget contributions should be scaled up, through a bigger external action budget governed by a 50% climate and environment spending target. Global Gateway initiatives would benefit from greater transparency, should support country and community ownership, target high risk and hard to decarbonise sectors of the economy and deliver positive development impacts to ensure additionality.

To further mobilize resources, innovative financing mechanisms must be explored—such as taxes on aviation and shipping, taxing ultra-high-net-worth individuals, and repurposing fossil fuel subsidies. The EU and AU must jointly commit to structural financial reforms, progressive taxation, and strengthening the UN's role in global tax governance.

The EU and AU must take a clear, united stance against fossil fuel investments: The EU must urgently end public support for fossil fuels, including support provided through development banks and export credit agencies (ECAs), and redirect them toward renewable energy, aligning with just transition principles and avoiding socially regressive impacts. Public spending, including subsidies and investments, must be explicitly prohibited from supporting fossil fuel infrastructure, including production, processing, distribution, storage, and combustion of fossil fuels. Additionally, the EU and AU should adequately regulate the private financial sector to align with the goals of the Paris Agreement. This means not only offering "green incentives" but also introducing stringent safeguards and penalties for climate-damaging activities. The EU and AU must commit to a fossil-free future, ensuring that all investments support a just and sustainable energy transition.

The continued promotion of fossil gas, including liquefied natural gas (LNG), as "transition fuels" is particularly concerning. This misrepresents gas as a path to energy security while displacing cleaner solutions and exposing countries to long-term economic and environmental harm. Large, export-oriented LNG projects in African countries—often backed by European actors—are primarily designed to serve foreign markets, while failing to expand access to affordable and reliable energy for local populations and contradicting global climate commitments. Critically, to align with their

climate commitments the EU must phase out gas by 2035, meaning it will no longer import African LNG in the near future. This makes new LNG investments economically unviable, risking stranded assets and wasted resources.

The EU must significantly increase its support for adaptation and loss and damage in Africa—both within its current budget cycle and in the upcoming 2028–2035 financial framework:

This includes substantial increases in grant-based funding for critical sectors that underpin climate resilience in low- and lower-middle-income countries (LICs and LMICs), such as water, climate-resilient infrastructure, health, sanitation and hygiene, agroecology, equitable food systems, and nature-based solutions that protect and restore ecosystems.

All adaptation investments must be grounded in the *Principles for Locally Led Adaptation (LLA)* to ensure that resources reach the most affected communities and reflect their knowledge systems and priorities. EU-supported initiatives—such as the Global Gateway—must strengthen mainstreaming of adaptation and disaster risk reduction by aligning with African countries' National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and wider development strategies. The EU must also provide increased support to African-owned and -led initiatives at local, national, and continental levels.

On the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), the EU must play a constructive role at COP30 by pushing for an operational framework backed by clear and equitable *Means of Implementation*—including finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building—so that GGA targets are not only aspirational but achievable for vulnerable countries.

In terms of loss and damage, the EU should commit new and additional resources to the Loss and Damage Fund, ensure predictable and ongoing funding, and promote direct access for affected communities. Furthermore, the EU and AU should jointly advocate for strong L&D finance in the Baku–Belém roadmap, support the establishment of a permanent L&D agenda item at COPs, and promote the launch of a *UNEP-hosted Loss and Damage Gap Report* as part of the WIM review process.

The EU-AU communiqué must chart a bold course for Africa's economic transformation through green industrialization, ensuring the continent fully benefits from its natural resources and plays a central role in the global energy transition:

Africa holds many of the critical minerals needed for clean technologies, yet these are often exported unprocessed, limiting local economic development and job creation. In 2020, Africa had an export worth of \$457 billion—mainly raw materials—while importing \$627 billion worth of high-value goods, reinforcing a persistent trade deficit. To even out this imbalance, the EU and AU must commit to local manufacturing, skills development, technology transfer, and fair participation across the green industrial value chain. This is vital for industrial resilience, climate and economic justice, and reducing global inequality.

The development of green value chain components for the energy transition, combined with regional integration, provides promising opportunities for African green industrialisation. Partnerships like the Clean Trade and Investment Partnership (CTIP) can support these goals—but must not become tools for securing Europe's access to raw materials at the cost of African communities. CTIP should instead advance local value creation, green jobs, and technology transfer, while prioritizing Africa's energy and development needs.

Particular caution is needed around the growing emphasis on hydrogen. Terms like “low-carbon hydrogen,” as seen in the South Africa-EU CTIP, risk enabling fossil-based hydrogen under a misleading label. This undermines Africa’s transition and risks locking in fossil infrastructure. Hydrogen initiatives must be grounded in energy additionality, ensuring renewable power used is new and surplus, not diverted from essential local use. All EU-AU trade and industrial initiatives must be guided by equity, sustainability, and sovereignty, enabling Africa to lead in clean energy, green manufacturing, and climate-resilient growth on its own terms.

As civil society organizations from both continents, we reaffirm our commitment to being active partners in shaping a just transition. Our voices must be heard and included in decision-making processes to ensure that the outcomes of this partnership serve people and the planet—not profit.