As climate change escalates, impacting human security, economic growth and development, Agenda 2063 faces new challenges and opportunities. This policy brief underscores the need to update Africa’s transformative continental framework to address climate risks and the transition to low-carbon pathways. The recommendations include integrating climate risk management, climate-resilient agriculture and renewable energy transition into national policies. Regional and continental efforts should focus on transboundary collaboration, climate-resilient trade and climate diplomacy in order to navigate the climate challenge while safeguarding Africa’s future prosperity and unity.
Key findings

- Integrating climate risk management into Africa’s strategies, particularly Agenda 2063, is critical to safeguarding vulnerable communities and enhancing resilience in the face of the escalating impact of climate change.
- Agenda 2063’s heavy reliance on Africa’s fossil fuel assets, now stranded by the global shift towards a low-carbon economy and carbon-related trade barriers, poses a significant challenge.
- Climate resilience is essential if Agenda 2063 is to be realised, as climate change leads to increased costs, increased vulnerability and a potential reduction in economic growth and development.
- Climate change is making an impact on Africa’s economic growth, with an average reduction in GDP per capita growth ranging from 10% to 13%, posing a considerable economic challenge.
- Realising Agenda 2063 comes at a carbon cost, with Africa expected to increase its contribution to global carbon emissions, putting the achievement of national climate targets at risk.

Recommendations

For African governments:

- Integrate climate-resilient agricultural practices and sustainable irrigation methods to enhance food security and rural resilience.
- Embed climate risk assessments in infrastructure development.
- Set ambitious renewable energy targets, incentivise private sector investment and promote research into clean energy transition.
- Implement gender-sensitive approaches to climate adaptation plans.
- Ensure that countries focus on climate mobility, both internally and across borders.

For regional economic communities:

- Establish platforms for addressing shared climate vulnerabilities, developing regional climate action plans and harmonising climate risk management practices.
- Standardise risk assessment methodology in cross-border infrastructure projects.
- Facilitate cross-border renewable energy markets, encouraging energy trade, expertise sharing and technology transfer.
- Develop regional water strategies that foster cooperation over transboundary water resources and enhance water security.

For the African Union:

- Initiate a review of Agenda 2063 to align with climate-resilient development pathways, capitalising on Africa’s changing global position.
- Strengthen the AU’s role as a global climate advocate, through equitable policies, increased financing, and international partnerships.
- Establish a regional climate hub for centralized data, research, and best practices to support informed climate decision-making.
- Create a dedicated fund for climate adaptation projects, combining resources, attracting private sector investment, and exploring innovative financing methods.
Introduction

In an era marked by the profound and escalating impact of climate change there is an urgent need to integrate the management of climate risks and recognition of the concomitant opportunities into continental strategies in Africa. Agenda 2063, the African Union’s transformative continental framework, is one initiative that can achieve its goals while enhancing resilience and safeguarding vulnerable communities.

Recent climate-related events have sent a clarion call, underscoring the importance of proactive measures to safeguard human security and advance sustainable development. In this context, the need to marry climate risk management and the fulfilment of Agenda 2063 becomes not only a priority but a necessity.

Agenda 2063 is one African Union initiative that can achieve its goals while enhancing resilience and safeguarding vulnerable communities.

Agenda 2063 was conceived in January 2015 when climate risks were less pronounced. A key assumption related to the continent’s fossil fuel assets, comprising oil, coal and natural gas and currently valued at about $10 trillion.

A single country, South Africa, currently has $17.1 billion in institutional investment in its fossil fuel value chain. Revenue from fossil fuels was intended firstly to fund the African Development Plan and secondly to provide the financial security to drive the continent’s development ambitions. The continued development of the fossil fuel industry in the wake of a transition to a low-carbon global economy empowered by new carbon-related trade barriers risks leaving Africa with stranded assets.

Majuba Power station, South Africa

Source: Gavin Fordham/Flickr
This policy brief sets out the critical need to update Agenda 2063 to address climate risks and to pivot to increasingly low-carbon pathways to maintain and expand Africa’s international trade ambitions. The recommendations are intended for African countries, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and the African Union (AU), to ensure human security while realising the goals of the agenda.

Agenda 2063 and climate change

Despite the challenges, Africa is making progress in implementing Agenda 2063, which includes an ambitious strategy for a prosperous Africa based on inclusive and sustainable development.

It aspires to serve as the continent’s guiding blueprint and master plan, steering Africa toward becoming a formidable global force in the years to come. The ambitious strategic framework, which was designed to guide the continent’s development over 50 years – from 2013 to 2063, hopes to transform Africa into a united, prosperous and peaceful continent, placing the well-being of its peoples at its core.

Agenda 2063 aspires to serve as Africa’s guiding blueprint and master plan, steering Africa toward becoming a formidable global force in the years to come

It seeks to eradicate poverty, promote inclusive economic growth, foster gender equality and enhance infrastructure and technology. It also aims to strengthen governance, democracy and social justice while preserving the continent’s cultural heritage and environment.

A recent assessment of Agenda 2063’s implementation underscores that, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been progress, leading to significant achievements since the initial review, which was conducted in 2019.

The review highlights an upward trajectory on the entire continent, with positive progress made in achieving most of the 20 goals (See Annexure 1). The overall score has risen to 51% compared to the 32% recorded in 2019.

The report also emphasises the imperatives of addressing infrastructure disparities, expediting industrialisation, boosting agricultural productivity and fostering economies that are resilient to climate change.

Climate resilience is the foundational element for the sustainable achievement of Agenda 2063. The African Development Bank (AfDB) identifies climate change as a fundamental threat to Africa’s development and, according to the International Monetary Fund, the African continent experiences a significant share (one-third) of the world’s droughts.

The frequency of storms and floods is accelerating more rapidly in Africa than in any other part of the world and Africa bears a disproportionately heavy burden
of the costs imposed by climate change. This is, in part, due to the increasing intensity and frequency of climate-change-driven threats, a significant reliance on natural resources and infrastructure and basic services and governance systems that are inadequate to enable it to withstand climate shocks.

People take refuge on the roofs of buildings following flooding caused by Cyclone Idai in Mozambique

The continent’s vulnerability to climate change is compounded by the intricate interplay of climate-related stressors and economic, social, environmental and political factors that interact and sometimes reinforce each other, magnifying the cumulative effect.

Prolonged drought, erratic rainfall and extreme weather events jeopardise livelihoods, exacerbate resource scarcity and amplify existing vulnerabilities

The multifaceted challenges of climate change intersect with the principles of human security set out in Agenda 2063. Prolonged drought, erratic rainfall and extreme weather events jeopardise livelihoods, exacerbate resource scarcity and amplify existing vulnerabilities. Slow onset impacts such as sea-level rise and salinisation threaten coastal communities. The resultant socio-economic pressures increase the potential for conflict, migration and social instability.
In addition to its repercussions for the potential for human capital development, climate change has an adverse effect on long-term inclusive growth. The lack of resilience and diminished adaptability of African nations to the detrimental consequences are already manifesting as reduced growth and development.

Analysis conducted by the AfDB, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa shows lower GDP per capita growth, with the poorest countries on the continent being those least able to adapt to climate change. This phenomenon, known as ‘adaptation deficit’, is common to poorer countries all over the world. The AfDB notes that Africa has been losing between 5% and 15% of its GDP per capita growth because of climate change and its impact.

In addition to its repercussions for the potential for human capital development, climate change has an adverse effect on long-term inclusive growth.

The Africa Climate Summit, held ahead of COP28, gave African leaders and stakeholders an important opportunity to address the urgent and escalating climate challenges facing the continent. With the Intergovernmental Panel

Africa Climate Summit, Nairobi, Kenya, 5 September 2023

AFRICA HAS BEEN LOSING BETWEEN 5% AND 15% OF ITS GDP PER CAPITA GROWTH DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACT

Source: Paul Kagame/Flickr
on Climate Change reporting that warming in Africa is accelerating faster than it is in the rest of the world, the summit became a critical arena for tackling the region’s disproportionate burden of climate events, which have severe repercussions for human security, economic stability, peace and public health.

One of the significant highlights of the summit was the announcement of substantial financial commitments. President William Ruto of Kenya unveiled pledges amounting to $23 billion, with the AfDB revealing that it had earmarked funds for green growth, mitigation and adaptation efforts. However, concerns were expressed about the long-term nature of the funding, which spans decades rather than the immediate future, and the absence of a strategic debt cancellation plan or fair climate finance distribution, which are crucial aspects of equitable climate action.

On 7 September 2023 the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), in collaboration with the Kenyan Foreign Service Academy, hosted a key side event during the summit. The event, which brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including government representatives, members of the United Nations, civil society, academia and non-governmental organisations, was an important platform from which to delve into innovative strategies to accelerate the realisation of Agenda 2063 while integrating climate-resilient approaches. It underscored the importance to the implementation of Agenda 2063 of forward thinking about climate.

A significant highlight of the Africa Climate Summit was the announcement of substantial financial commitments

Climate change jeopardises sustainable development, hampers economic growth and affects food security, clean energy and resilient infrastructure. Speakers at the event emphasised that it also affects human well-being and biodiversity, saying regional cooperation is vital to addressing the challenges it poses.

Improved access to finance bolsters the objectives of Agenda 2063, aligning with the AU’s aspirations. In essence, addressing climate change is integral to achieving Agenda 2063’s goals, spanning development, economic resilience and overall well-being in Africa.

Climate change not only impedes Africa’s development, there is a genuine concern that an inadequate response to the climate crisis may jeopardise the attainment of the goals and targets of Agenda 2063. Like other parts of the world where development has led to increased carbon emissions, Africa, with its rapidly growing population and the substantial need for better living standards, will also escalate its carbon footprint.

In essence, the advancement in development envisaged in Agenda 2063 will come with an associated carbon impact. Analysis conducted as part of the
ISS African Futures project indicates that fulfilling the objectives outlined in Agenda 2063 would lead to the release of approximately 297 million additional tons of carbon into the atmosphere by 2043.

To achieve sustainable development it’s critical to integrate climate risk management into the core strategies of Agenda 2063.

This implies that by that year Africa’s contribution to global carbon emissions will be closer to 12% than to the current projection of 9%, and will approach 30% by 2063. The continent will introduce an extra 1.2 billion tons of carbon into the atmosphere by 2043 in addition to the carbon emissions predicted for the development path from 2023.

Chart 1: Carbon emissions from Africa’s major contributors in 2019 and 2043
The analysis also states that a different perspective on Africa’s carbon emissions across extended timeframes reveals that in the Combined Agenda 2063 scenario Africa’s emissions will surpass the collective emissions of the 27 European Union countries by 2030 and will exceed the emissions of the USA by 2039, India by 2046 and China by 2056.

With the imminent risk of reaching a 1.5°C temperature increase in the near future and the pressing need to intensify efforts to pursue the most ambitious climate change mitigation strategies, there is a genuine possibility that climate change could significantly impede Africa’s development.

This is particularly concerning as scenarios with substantial growth potential, such as the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement and the development of manufacturing, are associated with substantial carbon emissions. It is clear that the achievement of Agenda 2063 is directly and indirectly influenced by the impact of climate change.

Governance mechanisms must be strengthened to respond effectively to changing climate conditions and mitigate potential conflicts arising from resource scarcity

Recommendations

General

To safeguard human security and achieve sustainable development it is critical to integrate climate risk management into the core strategies of Agenda 2063. This can be done by incorporating rigorous climate risk assessments in all projects to identify vulnerabilities, anticipate impact, design adaptive strategies and develop infrastructure that can endure extreme weather events and ensure the continuity of critical services.

This strategy should include vulnerability assessments to identify areas that are prone to climate-related risks including flooding, extreme heat, drought and rising sea levels.

Impact assessments should also be carried out for agricultural and food security projects to help determine how changing climate conditions will affect crop yields and to guide the choice of climate-resilient crop varieties and water management strategies.

In the case of Agenda 2063’s initiatives to promote renewable energy, adaptive assessments could help identify the potential impact of climate change on energy production and assess ways to improve adaptation. This information can inform strategies for diversifying energy sources to ensure energy security in the face of climate disruptions.

Governance mechanisms must be strengthened to respond effectively to changing climate conditions and mitigate potential conflicts arising
from resource scarcity. Capacity building will also be crucial, empowering communities and institutions with the ability to adapt to climate risks, resulting in the creation of sustainable livelihoods and reducing vulnerability.

Governments could establish climate resilience offices or task forces responsible for developing and implementing climate action plans as part of a climate resilience planning process. In regions where climate change exacerbates resource scarcity, governments could establish mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms to prevent disputes over water, land use, migratory patterns or access to natural resources.

These mechanisms may prove to be essential in preventing conflict and ensuring equitable resource distribution. Governments could also enact and enforce policies that encourage sustainable land use, emissions reductions and conservation. Beyond government action, capacity building will be a crucial component of climate adaptation plans on the continent – including through community resilience training, climate-resilient infrastructural skills and climate-adaptive education.

In regions where climate change exacerbates resource scarcity, governments could establish mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms to prevent disputes while all the flagship projects should have a stronger climate resilience character, three should receive special attention.

These are:

- Formulating an African Commodities Strategy that will take advantage of Africa’s critical minerals asset to power a global clean energy economy;
- Introducing an African passport and free movement of people to accommodate climate-change-related forced mobility, which is already a global phenomenon, and harness the developmental benefits of migration; and
- Silencing the guns by making a greater effort in relation to the climate-development-security nexus.

**Recommendations for African governments**

African countries should incorporate climate-resilient agricultural practices, such as drought-resistant crop varieties and sustainable irrigation methods, into their national agricultural strategies. The integration of climate data and predictive models can guide adaptive farming practices, enhancing food security and rural resilience.

As the impact of climate change continues to grow, climate risk assessments must be intrinsic to national infrastructure development. Ensuring that infrastructure projects are designed to withstand extreme weather events safeguards investments and minimises disruptions.
National disaster preparedness and response strategies should be devised, taking into consideration climate-induced vulnerabilities. The implementation of such strategies should be associated with investments in detection, observation, monitoring and analysis and forecasting, communicating and disseminating warnings about climate hazards.

African countries should set ambitious renewable energy targets aligned with climate goals. Creating supportive policy and regulatory frameworks, offering incentives for private sector investment and fostering research and development can accelerate the transition to clean energy, driving sustainable growth.

Governments and cities should anticipate and accommodate rural climate migrants, while also planning for migration from vulnerable regions.

Governments should integrate gender-sensitive approaches into climate adaptation plans. Recognising women as agents of change, enhancing their participation in decision making and addressing their unique vulnerabilities would ensure equitable and inclusive climate resilience.

Governments and cities should anticipate and accommodate rural climate migrants, while also planning for migration from vulnerable regions. It is also crucial to focus on creating safe and developmental pathways for climate migrants. By incorporating these measures into their plans, governments and cities can address the challenges of climate-induced migration effectively and ensure the well-being and sustainability of affected populations.

The primary effort African governments can make is to put climate change at the heart of economic, social and infrastructure development, policy making and national budgets and ensure implementation. Climate-resilient agriculture, infrastructural resilience and the renewable energy transition will follow automatically. Governments should also use the revenues from resources wisely to invest in climate-resilient economic and social development.

**Recommendations for African regional economic communities**

RECs should establish platforms on which member states can address shared climate vulnerabilities collaboratively. Many of the effects of climate change are not contained within borders and thus regional cooperation is required to address them effectively. The development of regional climate action plans enhances adaptive capacity and facilitates coordinated responses to climate-induced challenges.

Cross-border infrastructure projects should prioritise climate resilience. Developing standardised climate risk assessment methodologies and harmonised regulations ensures consistent climate risk management practices across states.
RECs should facilitate the establishment of regional renewable energy markets. Enabling cross-border energy trade, sharing expertise and fostering the transfer of technology can accelerate the adoption of renewable energy sources.

RECs should develop regional water management strategies that take into consideration climate-induced changes in water availability. Facilitating cooperation over transboundary water resources mitigates potential conflict and enhances water security.

**Recommendations for the African Union**

In order to adapt to the new boundary conditions, which include the impact of rapid climate change as well as geopolitical fluidity, the AU should begin to review Agenda 2063 to include a more climate-resilient development pathway for Africa that takes advantage of the potential new positioning of the continent in the world order.

The synergy between climate resilience and Agenda 2063 is a testament to Africa’s resilience, adaptability and unwavering determination to thrive

The AU must amplify its role as a global advocate for climate justice. By championing equitable climate policies, securing robust financing mechanisms and leveraging international partnerships the AU reinforces Africa’s position on the climate agenda. It should infuse climate education into its educational initiatives. By fostering climate literacy, the union can equip citizens with the knowledge and skills needed to understand, adapt to and advocate for climate resilience.

The AU should establish a regional climate data and knowledge hub. Centralising climate information, research and best practice equips member states and RECs with the resources necessary to make informed decisions about climate.

It is essential to create a dedicated fund for climate adaptation and resilience projects across the continent. The fund could pool resources from international partners, tap into private sector investment and explore innovative financing mechanisms to enhance Africa’s climate resilience.

The integration of climate risk management into Agenda 2063 will reflect a profound commitment to securing Africa’s future. By embracing these recommendations at country, REC and continental levels Africa can navigate effectively the challenges posed by climate change while safeguarding human security, prosperity and unity.

This synergy between climate resilience and Agenda 2063 is not just an imperative, it is a testament to Africa’s resilience, adaptability and unwavering determination to thrive in the face of the new challenges posed by climate change.
### Annex 1: Overview of goals and priority areas of Agenda 2063

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<th>Aspiration</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Priority Areas</th>
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| 1) A Prosperous Africa, based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development | 1) A High Standard of Living, Quality of Life and Well Being for All Citizens | • Incomes, Jobs and decent work  
• Poverty, Inequality and Hunger  
• Social security and protection Including Persons with Disabilities  
• Modern and Livable Habitats and Basic Quality Services |
| | 2) Well Educated Citizens and Skills revolution underpinned by Science, Technology and Innovation | • Education and STI skills driven revolution |
| | 3) Healthy and well-nourished citizens | • Health and Nutrition |
| | 4) Transformed Economies | • Sustainable and inclusive economic growth  
• STI driven Manufacturing / Industrialization and Value Addition  
• Economic diversification and resilience  
• Hospitality/Tourism |
| | 5) Modern Agriculture for increased productivity and production | • Agricultural Productivity and Production |
| | 6) Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth | • Marine resources and Energy  
• Ports Operations and Marine Transport |
| 2) An Integrated Continent Politically united and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of African Renaissance | 8) United Africa (Federal or Confederate) | • Framework and Institutions for a United Africa |
| | 9) Continental Financial and Monetary Institutions are established and functional | • Financial and Monetary Institutions |
| | 10) World Class Infrastructure crisscrosses Africa | • Communications and Infrastructure Connectivity |
• Human Rights, Justice and The Rule of Law |
| | 12) Capable institutions and transformative leadership in place | • Institutions and Leadership  
• Participatory Development and Local Governance |
| 4) A Peaceful and Secure Africa | 13) Peace Security and Stability is preserved | • Maintenance and Preservation of Peace and Security |
| | 14) A Stable and Peaceful Africa | • Institutional structure for AU Instruments on Peace and Security |
| | 15) A Fully functional and operational APSA | • Fully operational and functional APSA Pillars |
| 5) Africa with a Strong Cultural Identity Common Heritage, Values and Ethics | 16) African Cultural Renaissance is pre-eminent | • Values and Ideals of Pan Africanism  
• Cultural Values and African Renaissance  
• Cultural Heritage, Creative Arts and Businesses |
| 6) An Africa Whose Development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by African People, especially its Women and Youth, and caring for Children | 17) Full Gender Equality in All Spheres of Life | • Women and Girls Empowerment  
• Violence & Discrimination against Women and Girls |
<p>| | 18) Engaged and Empowered Youth and Children | • Youth Empowerment and Children |</p>
<table>
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<th>Priority Areas</th>
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| 7) An Africa as A Strong, United, Resilient and Influential Global Player and Partner | 19) Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence | • Africa’s place in global affairs.  
• Partnership |
| 20) Africa takes full responsibility for financing her development |  | • African Capital market  
• Fiscal system and Public Sector Revenues  
• Development Assistance |

Source: African Union, Agenda 2063

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Development partners
This policy brief was funded by the Government of Denmark. The ISS is also grateful for support from the members of the ISS Partnership Forum: the Hanns Seidel Foundation, the European Union, the Open Society Foundations and the governments of Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.