

**Youth Key Messages to the Technical Conference of States
for the Continental Expansion of the Kampala Ministerial
Declaration on Migration, Environment and Climate Change
(KDMECC-AFRICA).**

August 2023

Summary of Key Messages

- **Human Mobility as Adaptation:** We urge you to recognize planned and regular migration and relocation as an adaptation strategy from now onwards in policy and practice. Embed human rights and gender-transformative approaches into policies and establish guidelines for planned relocation, migrant and diaspora support and protection.
- **Youth Inclusion in Decision-Making:** We urge you to ensure the meaningful participation of African youth in migration, environment, and climate change decisions at all levels. Youth and children are a vulnerable group but also have experience, knowledge and valuable solutions, and must prioritize their voices. Establish regional youth climate mobility advisory committees.
- **Climate Finance Access:** Mobilize local and international funding while eliminating the barriers and bureaucracies limiting access to finance for safe and regular migration, planned relocation, resilience building, early warning systems and addressing loss and damage. Further, establish a dedicated youth climate mobility fund for the implementation of our commitments towards the KDMECC and create green jobs. In addition, establish a transparent and accountable financial framework to ensure finance reaches the youth and the most vulnerable.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** We recommend you promote multi-stakeholder partnerships, including youth-led organizations, to accelerate climate action. Include youth in decision-making processes at all levels as equal partners with meaningful roles and incentives.
- **Community Resilience and Capacity Building:** Strengthen youth and local communities' adaptive capacity by investing in education, adaptation programmes, and green jobs for youth. Enhance disaster risk reduction efforts and infrastructure projects.
- **Data and Research Integration:** Collect and share accurate data on climate-induced migration. Utilize local knowledge and scientific research to inform policies and strategies, while establishing in-time monitoring centres.
- **Legal Frameworks for Climate Migrants:** Develop policy and legal frameworks to protect and empower climate migrants while ensuring gender sensitivity in policies for equitable solutions.

Opening Statement

Building on the key messages from the youth of East and Horn of Africa (EHoA) towards the KDMECC processes, we the youth from across the African continent present our priorities and commitments towards the expansion of the KDMECC. The youth contributing to this resolute represented the EHoA, Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), West and Central Africa and North Africa regions of the continent. Recognizing that Africa is the most vulnerable continent to climate change and its impact on human mobility and that youth and children bear the brunt of the negative effects of climate change, we cannot overlook the stark reality that the youth are faced with limitations in resources and capabilities to mitigate the multifaceted impacts of climate-induced disasters and to recover from the upheavals of disaster-induced displacement. In light of these challenges, it is imperative to acknowledge that the majority of Africa's population comprises young individuals under the age of 35, making them vital stakeholders whose active participation in decision-making processes directly affecting their lives and futures is indispensable. We rise to address this by deliberating add-ons to the KDMECC to make it ideal and inclusive of youth voices from all regions of Africa.

The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on migration and human mobility on youth, women, migrants and other vulnerable persons in Africa are not negligible. The increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events such as floods and droughts and other environment-related changes are triggering, often forcing millions of Africans to migrate, highlighting the imperative for ambitious and immediate action. Storms and droughts are already threatening livelihoods, water and food security, people's health and overall human security. Without concrete climate action, by 2050

about 19 million people in North Africa will become internal climate migrants¹; 86 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa will migrate within their own countries due to climate change, while 32 million intra-regional migrants will be recorded in West African countries with sizable numbers in East Africa². In the SADC region, over 2.5 million people have been displaced by tropical cyclones in the last two years alone, making food insecurity and the humanitarian situation even worse³.

Our key messages underscore the urgent need for collaborative action to address the complex intersection of climate change and migration, driven by the voices and determination of African youth who are at the forefront of driving positive change for sustainable human mobility in the context of climate change and a just future. Therefore, we urge policymakers and decision-makers to take urgent action to address the underlying factors that lead to people's vulnerability. We also believe that human mobility, including migration and planned relocation, can be harnessed to transform the lives of people at risk of displacement, frontline communities, migrants or displaced persons, their communities of origin and their host communities. We, therefore, call upon governments, the United Nations (UN), Civil Society Organizations, development partners and other relevant stakeholders to recognize the nexus of migration, environment and climate change at national, regional and global levels. For instance, at Global Climate processes such as the Conference of the Parties (COPs) and other pertinent forums, parties must ensure that climate change and human mobility are at the centre of decisions made, and that progress is made in a transparent and inclusive manner. We continue to bring to your attention the limited representation and meaningful participation of African youth in decision-making processes on this issue. It is therefore imperative that this Official Pre-Africa Climate Summit (ACS) Technical Conference of States for the Continental Expansion of the KDMECC-AFRICA and other national, regional and international fora and instruments consider and engage with the continental youth key messages, which seek to represent the voices of youth and their policy demands.

Our Messages on Migration, Environment and Climate Change

As youth advocates from across Africa, through youth consultations supported by the IOM, US State Department, MiRAC, and AFRICA Regular Migrant Program, we present the following key priorities for discussion during the Pre-ACS Technical Conference of States for urgent policy action and implementation. Our overarching demand that unifies all themes is that the youth should be actively and meaningfully included in all decision-making processes concerning migration, environment and climate change governance and implementation. Further, youth must be recognized as a vulnerable group, acknowledging that climate change affects them disproportionately.

Building community resilience, youth and institutional capacity to address the drivers of climate-induced migration and displacement.

Climate vulnerability is a product of hazard, risk, and adaptive capacity. It is thus important to address the root causes of vulnerability and proactively strengthen the adaptive capacity of local communities and reduce loss and damage. **We recommend and urge our governments, UN entities and other stakeholders to:**

- Enhance knowledge transfer and adaptation, innovations and foster capacity-building towards short-medium-long term strategies co-designed with youth, communities and multiple stakeholders to address poverty, hunger, and gender inequality through; formal curriculum reforms, non-formal and informal education, community and locally based

¹ Concrete Solutions Needed to Address Climate Migration in the Mediterranean Region: IOM. (2023, June 22). International Organization for Migration. <https://www.iom.int/news/concrete-solutions-needed-address-climate-migration-mediterranean-region-iom>

² Aishwarya Rai, K. T. (2023, January 17). Amid Record Drought and Food Insecurity, East Africa's Protracted Humanitarian Crisis Worsens. migrationpolicy.org. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/east-africa-drought-food-insecurity-refugees>

³ Climate-related security risks in the SADC region. (2022, November 23). SIPRI. <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/topical-backgrounder/2022/climate-related-security-risks-sadc-region>

adaptation programmes, skilling programmes for youth and other marginalized groups in energy transition, access and control to land, alternative livelihoods and green jobs.

- Increase institutional capacity to integrate climate action with a focus on prioritizing the most vulnerable groups in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) at the local level by 2027.
- Invest in adaptation and sustainable infrastructure projects to strengthen the resilience of communities to the adverse effects of climate change and extreme weather events. For example, develop early warning systems adapted to each region or environment.
- Establish and implement human-centric regulations, such as emergency preparedness plans, social nets and zoning ordinances, by 2027 to limit triggering activities in hazard-prone areas, while systematically integrating Nature-based Solutions into national and regional mitigation and adaptation strategies and plans.

Data collection, research and integration of local knowledge in climate and migration policies.

Despite the growing number of internally displaced persons, internal and international migrants due to climate change, most African countries fail to collect and present precise data. Most climate migrants and people displaced go unregistered despite the frequency of climate-related migration. Evidence-based data can feed into the development of policies and programmes to ensure adaptation, and mitigation whilst enhancing creativity in climate change and human mobility technology and solutions.

We urge governments, the UN bodies, CSOs, development bodies and other relevant stakeholders to:

- Establish new, strengthen and harmonize the existing data collection systems, data processing, dissemination, and data access on the migration and the climate change nexus to inform policies and programmes and develop/update migration strategies.
- Establish and invest in early warning systems and design response strategies and training centres to educate youth and communities at risk.
- Set up scientific centres in higher learning institutions to conduct advanced research on the impact of climate mobility on communities living within and across Africa. Periodically carry out monitoring and evaluations in terms of adaptation of the most vulnerable areas to build solid databases in order to facilitate the proper implementation of programs and projects.
- Adopt and utilize traditional, and emerging technologies such as Artificial intelligence, geometric and remote sensing, while upholding the highest standards of transparency and ethical consideration abiding by the “do no harm” principle.

Recognize human mobility as an adaptation option while adopting human rights-based approaches.

Climate change and associated environmental disasters have forced people to migrate to mostly urban centres, triggering resource-based conflicts, adaptation challenges and disputes over limited resources coupled with notable changes in communities. In order to ensure resilient, sustainable and inclusive societies, **we urge governments, CSOs, development bodies, the UN bodies and other relevant stakeholders to:**

- Recognize human mobility as an adaptation option while integrating international principles of human rights-based approaches into relevant national policies– Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)– strategies and frameworks, including developing sustainable guidelines regarding relocation.
- Promote collaborative efforts across borders and within countries for enabled human mobility, planned relocation, and peacebuilding. In this light, it’s crucial to leverage diaspora support and accelerate the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) to benefit from collaboration, migrant contributions, and the free flow of resources, knowledge, skills, and technology.

- Ensure the protection of those displaced by climate and environmental impacts, from the exacerbated vulnerabilities of dangerous journeys.

Collaborate with multiple stakeholders including youth, local, indigenous and frontline communities either displaced or at risk of displacement.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships on migration, environment and climate change are increasingly important in the creation of sustainable, resilient, and locally-led solutions. To protect populations at risk, isolated solutions cannot resolve challenges of migration, environment, and climate change. To achieve efficient, inclusive, and impactful action, **we urge our governments, the United Nations, Civil Society Organisations, development partners and other relevant stakeholders to:**

- Enhance collaboration among governments, youth, local and indigenous communities, the private sector, academia, multilateral organizations, the international community, and civil society to accelerate action on climate adaptation, climate literacy, migration and climate action.
- Inclusion of youth-led organisations in national, regional and continental level climate change working groups, formal policy-making and implementation processes.
- Establish Youth climate mobility advisory committees to ensure the smooth running of implementation, financial transparency and accountability.

Mobilize, operationalize and ensure easy access to finances for adaptation, and loss and damage

As climate impacts continue to worsen, the need to urgently generate finance for adaptation as well as loss and damage is increasing. Climate finance will help mitigate the impacts of climate change and help countries adapt to this reality, strengthen state capacities for migration management and displacement prevention and accommodate the local needs of developing countries and Small Island States (SIDs). **To achieve this, we demand that our governments, the United Nations, CSOs, development partners and other relevant stakeholders:**

- Mobilize local and international financing to ensure safe, regular and dignified human mobility and planned relocation. All aspects of mobilized finance should be clearly structured and monitored while ensuring transparency and accountability are well stipulated.
- Address barriers such as bureaucratic processes limiting youth access to finance for adaptation, loss and damage while scaling up funding for preparedness, relocation, and planned migration. Further identify pathways to improve migrants, youth and refugees' access to climate finance, technology, innovation, and information to foster livelihood activities and resilience.
- Establish a dedicated African youth climate mobility fund and enhance access to grants and innovative finance for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and climate migrants to engage in policy development, green entrepreneurship, and digital access to meaningfully participate in policy-making, and digital initiatives on migration and climate change at national, regional and global levels.
- Make laws and plans to allocate contingency funds and resources and support infrastructure development through public-private partnerships to support disaster high-risk areas prone to environmental hazards.
- Emphasize the need for the Global North to meet their pledges in delivering loss and damage and adaptation funds, and keeping temperature rise 1.5 °C established during the Paris Agreement. In addition, reach an agreement with the Global North to establish safe, dignified and regular migration pathways for climate migrants while ensuring rights for all migrants no matter what, not matter where.

Establishing policies and frameworks to support people on the move, people to stay and people to move in the context of climate change.

- Urging the establishment of frameworks to empower and protect climate migrants, coupled with introducing immigration naturalization processes. These measures ensure organized and compassionate responses, while certifying migrants' status, granting access to fundamental rights, and promoting integration into host communities for enhanced societal resilience.
- Addressing gender sensitivity in the legal frameworks. Gender-sensitive policies ensure that the unique challenges faced by women are considered in climate mobility planning.

Our commitments

We, the youth of Africa, remain committed to protecting our communities against the existential threat of climate change. We commit to:

1. Build capacity and facilitate knowledge exchange on the climate change-migration nexus through collaborations with youth, policymakers and local communities. For example, through YOUNGO Climate Change and Migration working group and other platforms such as the Africa Climate Mobility Initiative youth forum, we will proceed our climate mobility advocacy to the Conference of Youth (COY18), COP28 and other policy and implementation for at all levels onwards.
2. Drive and execute practical solutions and initiatives locally and globally to boost community resilience, support migrants and IDPs, raise awareness, promote climate mobility literacy, and enhance adaptative capacity.
3. Continue to advocate for meaningful participation of youth, children, women, and marginalized communities in decision-making processes and proactively engage in policy advocacy to address knowledge gaps to ensure scientific, indigenous knowledge and local approaches are integrated into local, national, and regional plans in addressing migration and climate change, and ensure they are localized to fit affected communities.
4. Foster partnerships with governments, NGOs, Community-Based Organisations, and youth organizations to provide environmental initiatives, platforms and forums aimed at building the capacities of communities and youth.
5. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of set government policies, projects, and plans on migration, climate change and across related sectors by using collected data to analyze, identify, hold accountable and communicate gaps in implementation for improved delivery of impactful outcomes.
6. Advocate and influence inclusive labour policies for migrants that ensures decent and good quality jobs for all and leaves no one behind especially youth and women while engaging constructively with social partners and other stakeholders.

Our dedications stem from our shared identity as African youth. We are resolute in our resolve to continue our endeavours from COY18, COP28, and other global undertakings to come, as well as local and regional initiatives. Our commitment persists as we work towards contributing to the realization of the "Africa We Want" Agenda 2063. We champion and spearhead the proactive inclusion of climate mobility in discussions, policy and action, with a steadfast focus on placing climate migrants, youth, and vulnerable communities at the heart of all our endeavours.

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These Key Messages were created by the youth contributors above in a youth engagement forum which gathered over 70 African youth from 36 African countries in Nairobi on 16 and 17 August 2023 – hosted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with the United States Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration through the Africa Regional Migration Program (ARMP).

