



REGIONAL SNAPSHOT  
AFRICA

# THE STATE OF CLIMATE AMBITION

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UNDP's Climate Promise is the largest global offer on NDC support, covering over 120 countries and territories, representing 80 percent of all developing countries globally – including 40 least developed countries, 28 small island developing states, and 14 high emitters – to enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions under the global Paris Agreement. Delivered in collaboration with a wide variety of partners, it is the world's largest offer of support for the enhancement of climate pledges. Learn more at [climatepromise.undp.org](https://climatepromise.undp.org) and follow at [@UNDPClimate](https://twitter.com/UNDPClimate).

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## INTRODUCTION

Africa is a highly complex region – blessed with natural capital and biodiversity; home to 1.13 billion people, one-third of the world’s languages, and a rich and diverse culture; yet also mired in conflict and other crises. This impedes basic activities such as food production, local economic development and healthcare access. Of the 46 countries of sub-Saharan Africa, 32 hold Least Developed Countries (LDCs) status, six are Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and 33 are considered fragile states. Regional poverty fell to 38.9 percent in 2018, with the biggest improvement in West Africa<sup>1</sup>. Despite rich groundwater resources, around 412 million people still do not have access to safe drinking water<sup>2</sup>, while 600 million people in Africa (48 percent of the continent’s population) still have no access to electricity<sup>3</sup>. Finding a sustainable solution to meet growing energy needs is one of the core development challenges for the continent but is hindered by the limited capacity of local governments. Rapid urbanization leaves cities unable to meet the growing demand for jobs and provide adequate housing, infrastructure, and security services. Further, in many countries, economic growth has not benefited the poorest, and women’s participation in decision-making remains very low. An increasing number of youth are without adequate skills or jobs.

Climate change, natural, and man-made disasters risk undoing years of hard-won development gains.

Overall, the region is responsible for only 7.2 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, of which Nigeria and South Africa are collectively responsible for about one-quarter (1.8 percent)<sup>4</sup>. Nonetheless, Africa is one of the regions most impacted by the adverse effects of climate change<sup>5</sup>. Reasons for Africa’s vulnerability are diverse and include - lack of economic diversification, poor diffusion of technologies and information relevant to support adaptation, and high dependence on agro-ecosystems for livelihoods (around 70 percent of the population in Africa are smallholder farmers<sup>6</sup>) which has resulted in lower adaptive capacity of livelihood systems. Among the key projected impacts are biodiversity loss, water shortages, reduced food production, loss of lives, and reduced economic growth<sup>7</sup>. Endowed with substantial renewable energy resources, Africa could meet nearly a quarter of its energy needs from indigenous and clean renewable energy by 2030<sup>8</sup>. Modern renewables amounting to 310 gigawatts (GW) could provide half the continent’s total electricity generation capacity – this corresponds to a sevenfold increase from the capacity available in 2017, which amounted to 42 GW<sup>9</sup>.

The analysis below provides a regional perspective that builds upon, and updates the information, from UNDP’s NDC Global Outlook Report 2021: *The State of Global Ambition*, published in October 2021.

## NDC SUBMISSION STATUS

**FIGURE 1**  
NDC submission status in Africa,  
as of 15 June 2022

All countries in Africa (n=46)	Climate Promise supported countries in Africa (n=44)
Submitted: <b>40</b>	Submitted: <b>39</b>
To be submitted: <b>5</b>	To be submitted: <b>4</b>
Unclear: <b>1</b>	Unclear: <b>1</b>

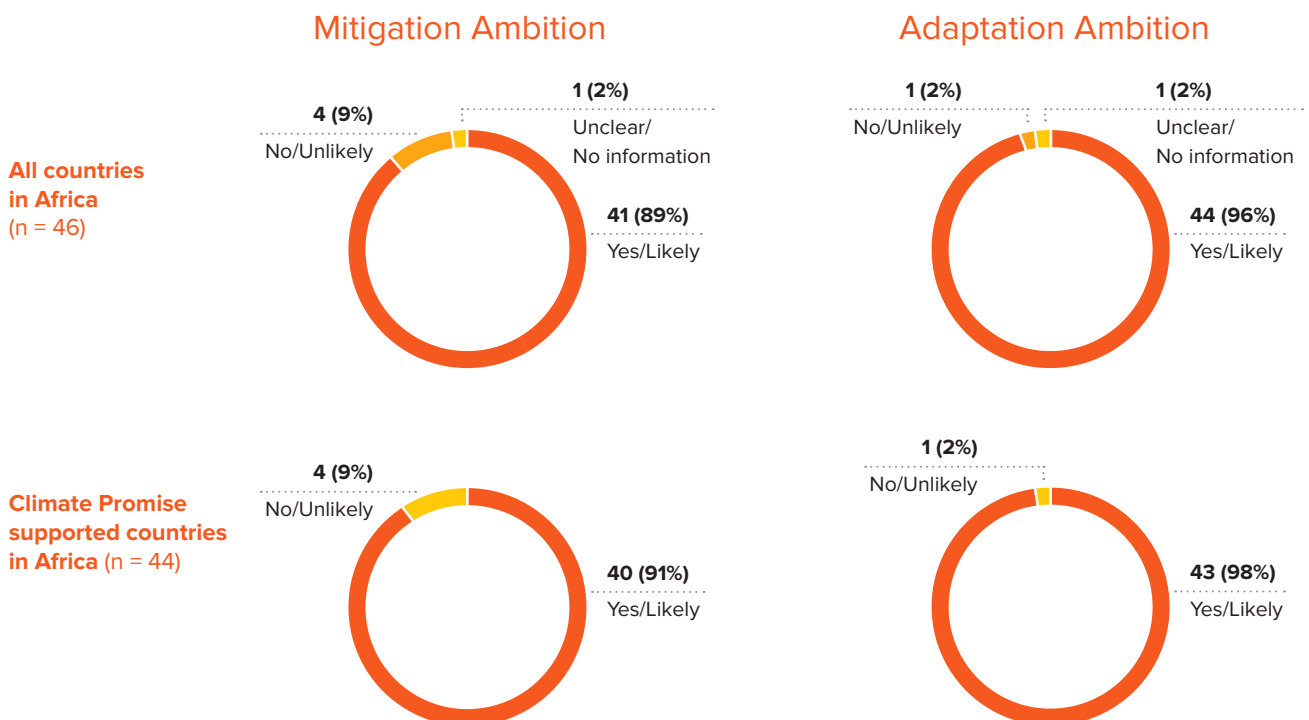
Of the 46 countries in the region, 44 (96 percent)<sup>10</sup> received support through UNDP’s Climate Promise to prepare second-generation NDCs. Of these, 39 (89 percent) had submitted second-generation NDCs as of 15 June 2022 (including interim NDCs from **Togo** and **Uganda**) (Figure 1). Four Climate Promise supported countries (**Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, Lesotho, and Madagascar**) plan to submit updated NDCs ahead of COP27, while **Gabon** remains unclear. **Angola** also plans to further revise its submitted NDC.

## NDC AMBITON INTENTIONS

All 44 countries supported under the Climate Promise have, or will, enhance the adaptation component of their NDCs – an obvious and critical priority given the regional context and its vulnerability profile (Figure 2). At the same time, 91 percent of Climate Promise supported countries are also raising mitigation

ambition despite the insignificant regional contribution to global GHG emissions – including the region’s two highest emitters (South Africa and Nigeria). Of the two countries not receiving support from Climate Promise in the region, one is raising its ambition, while the intention of the other one is unclear at this time.

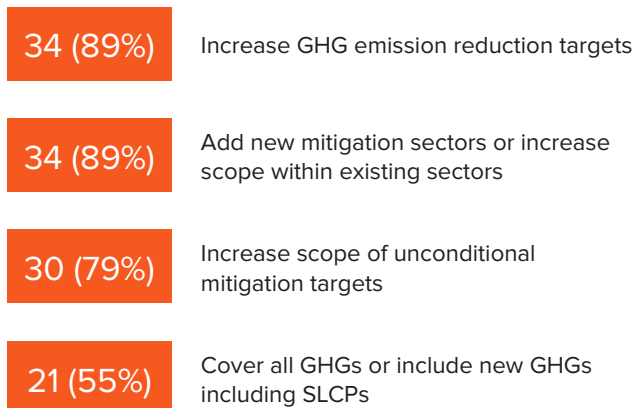
**FIGURE 2**  
NDC mitigation and adaptation enhancement intentions in Africa



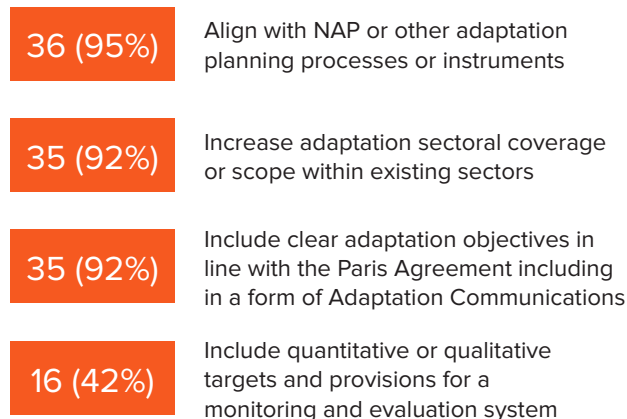
**FIGURE 3**

**Selected mitigation and adaptation pathways of Climate Promise countries in Africa**

**Mitigation Pathways**



**Adaptation Pathways**



A large majority (89 percent) of African countries supported under the Climate Promise are raising **mitigation ambition** either through stronger emission-reduction targets and/or adding new mitigation sectors or increasing scope within sectors featured in the initial NDCs (Figure 3). Significantly, 79 percent also increased the scope of their unconditional mitigation targets – thereby indicating their intentions to put domestic funding towards combatting climate change.

The most common **adaptation enhancement** selected by Climate Promise supported countries (95 percent) was to strengthen alignment of the NDC with National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) or other adaptation planning processes and instruments. A significant majority (92 percent) increased the existing sectoral scope or added sectors for adaptation, while 92 percent also defined clearer adaptation objectives and/or targets.



## Central African Republic

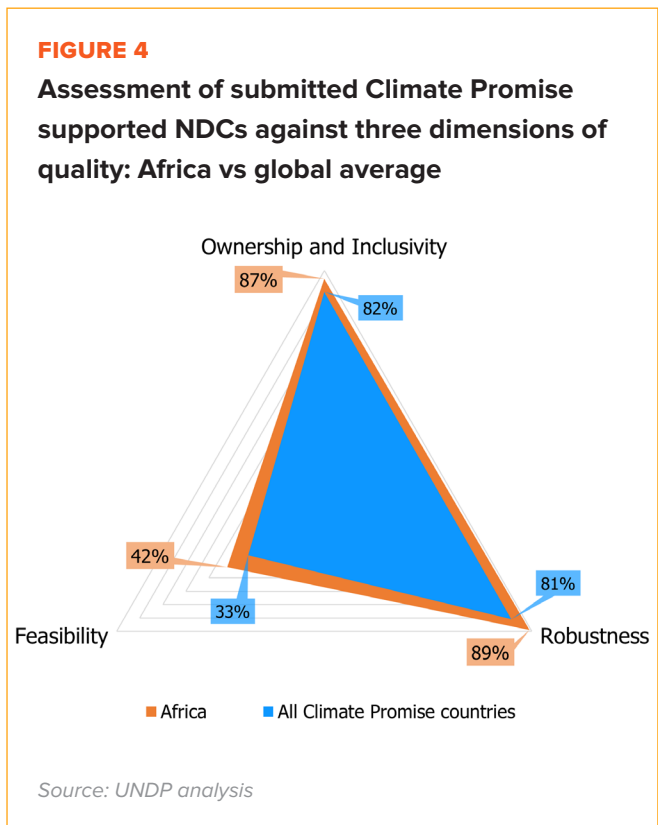
### INCREASED SECTOR SCOPE RAISES AMBITION

The Central African Republic stepped up mitigation ambition in its NDC submitted in January 2022 – committing to unconditional GHG reduction targets of 9.03 percent by 2025 and 11.82 percent by 2030 and conditional targets of 14.64 percent by 2025 and 24.28 percent by 2030 compared to business-as-usual (BAU). This compares to just five percent in the first NDC. To do so, the updated NDC expanded coverage to include the transport, mining, land use, and housing sectors as well as short-lived climate pollutants, including hydrofluorocarbons. The NDC formulation process was also carried out in a more inclusive manner, with particular attention given to gender mainstreaming across all activities. Data quality was improved, and adaptation planning made more robust with measures based on targeted goals that are consistent with sectoral objectives and aligned with the country's National Adaptation Plan (NAP). UNDP's Climate Promise support facilitated the government to improve the quality of the NDC and identify options for raising ambition. This included support to assess costs of adaptation and mitigation activities, develop a roadmap for NDC implementation and a NDC national resource mobilization strategy, establish an MRV system, and assess institutional capacity needs of those involved in NDC implementation. A NDC communication strategy and related tools were developed to support awareness raising, mobilization and engagement of all stakeholders in NDC implementation, in particular youth, women, and indigenous peoples.

The quality of an NDC is arguably as important as its ambition. Higher-quality NDCs are more likely to lead to successful implementation and signal the government’s intention to be accountable for turning pledges into actions. Under the Climate Promise, UNDP developed a Quality Assurance Checklist that allows governments and/or other practitioners to systematically review opportunities to improve NDC quality against three dimensions: i) *Robustness*, ii) *Feasibility*, and iii) *Ownership and Inclusivity*. Using this checklist, UNDP undertook an in-depth analysis of second-generation NDCs submitted by Climate Promise supported countries, scoring NDCs based on a percentage of criteria that were met<sup>11</sup>.

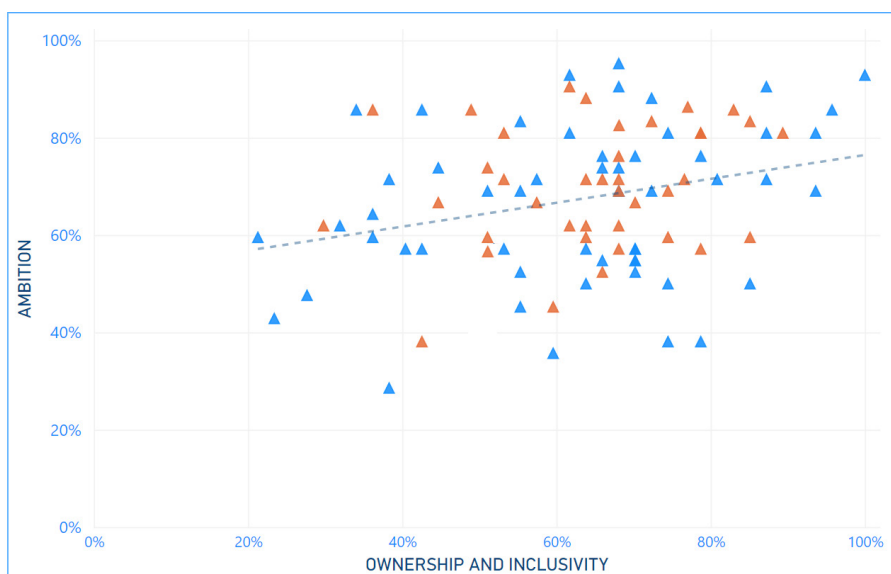
In comparison to the global average, the African region scored higher on all three quality dimensions (Figure 4). A significant majority (89 percent) of submitted NDCs from Africa are robust and demonstrate ownership and inclusivity (87 percent). While the NDCs were weakest on implementation feasibility (42 percent), they still scored higher than the global average (33 percent) – an attribute that will hopefully be recognized by financing sources.

There is also a positive correlation between the level of NDC ambition in Africa and the extent of inclusivity



efforts during the revision process – in line with global findings (Figure 5). However, there remains a variance that may be due to differing national circumstances and contexts, but also to other factors that impact ambition (e.g., political will).

**FIGURE 5**  
**Mapping NDC ambition to inclusive approaches: Africa vs global average**



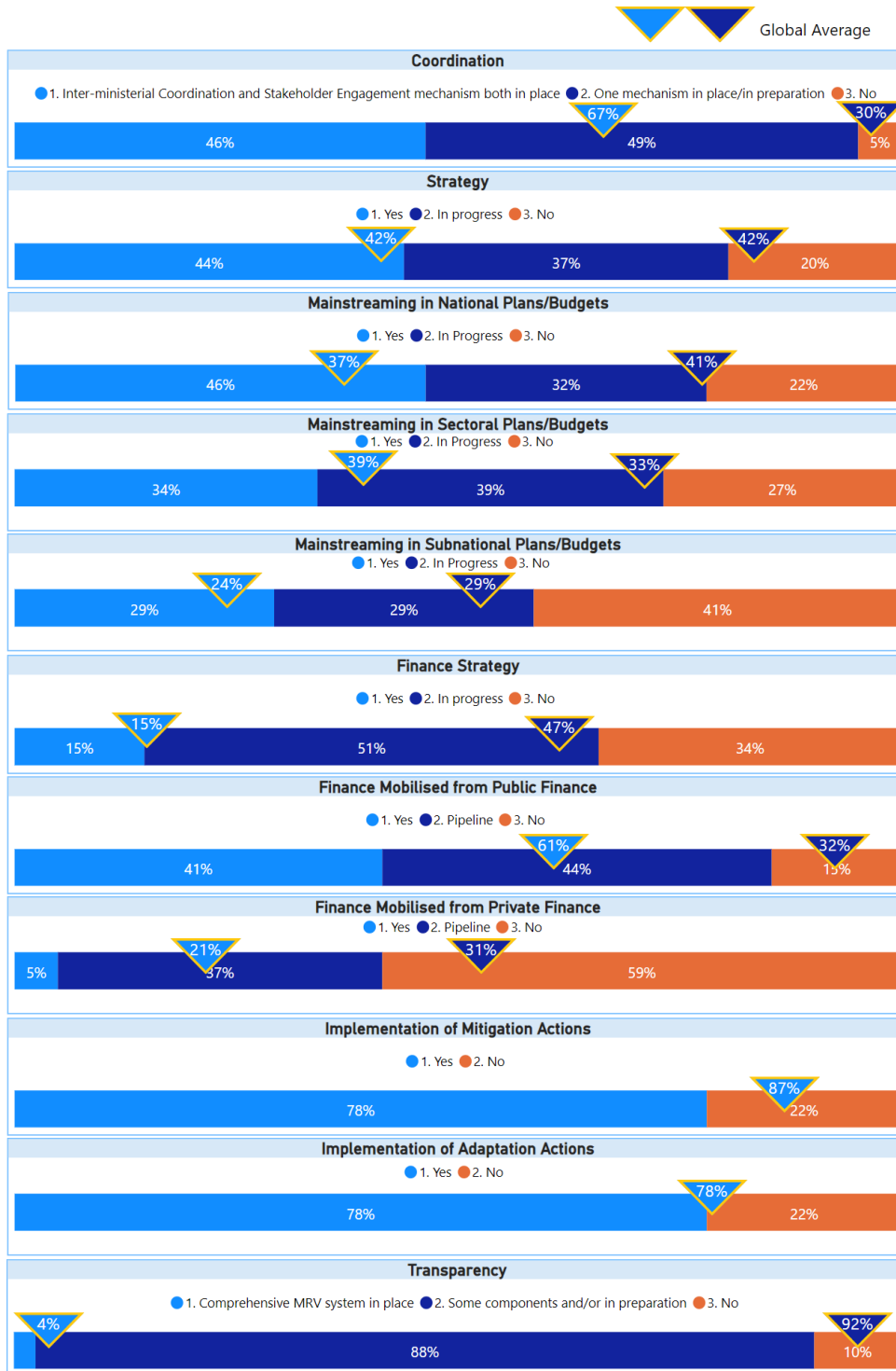
Source: UNDP Analysis. Note: Orange color triangles represent the 38 African countries supported by the Climate Promise that completed the NDC Quality Assurance Review.

# NDC IMPLEMENTATION READINESS

In 2019, UNDP defined and began monitoring seven “building blocks” for effective NDC implementation that are based on UNDP’s experience and lessons

learned from supporting countries throughout the NDC cycle<sup>12</sup>. Figure 6 compares progress in Africa against the global average (triangles).

**FIGURE 6**  
Progress on key systems and architecture: Africa vs global average



Source: UNDP analysis. n = 39 for Africa responses. Global averages are shown in the triangles.





Regional progress on putting in place the foundational “building blocks” of NDC implementation shows both positive and negative variances from the global aggregated results reported by 122 countries.

- In terms of **key coordination and engagement mechanisms**, 46 percent of the region reports having these in place vs 67 percent globally, although 44 percent of countries in the region have **NDC implementation strategies** in place vs 42 percent globally.
- On **mainstreaming**, African countries are mostly ahead of the global average – with 46 percent having mainstreamed NDCs into national plans and budgets (vs 37 percent globally), 34 percent into sectoral plans and budgets (vs 39 percent globally), and 29 percent into sub-national plans and budgets (vs 24 percent globally).
- The region lags the global average on **mobilizing finance**, with 41 percent of countries accessing public finance (vs 61 percent globally) and only five percent accessing private finance (vs 21 percent globally). The region is also lagging slightly on **implementation of mitigation actions** (78 percent vs the global average of 87 percent).
- On **transparency**, 10 percent of the region indicated they still have not begun work on putting in place essential MRV systems – compared to four percent globally – but the majority have initiated this important work. One needed area of improvement is activity data, as a number of African countries are

basing their NDCs on GHG inventory data that has not been updated recently, including a reliance on default emission factors and data.

### Support needs identified by Climate Promise supported countries in Africa

The findings of the NDC implementation survey are strongly aligned with future support needs identified by Climate Promise supported countries in Africa<sup>13</sup>. Almost half (43 percent) indicated that they need future support to finance NDC implementation. For most, this meant mobilizing finance, with some specifying support for turning NDC objectives into bankable projects (e.g., **Burundi**) while others are looking to establish national climate funds to facilitate project development and implementation (e.g., **Cote d'Ivoire**). African countries also prioritized strengthened institutional coordination and stakeholder engagement (32 percent) and transparency (11 percent) as two priority areas for support. For example, **Malawi** highlighted the need to raise awareness and profiling of the NDC at district and community levels, while **Chad** needs an NDC coordination structure for implementation. In **Zimbabwe** and **South Africa**, there is more focus on the need to engage and build capacity of the private sector, women, and youth. Meanwhile, many countries indicate they require support to operationalize their MRV systems. This includes building the human capacity to run the system (e.g., **Malawi**), strengthening data management (e.g., **Botswana**), and, in some cases, developing the MRV system (e.g., **Guinea**). In general, the African region overall also needs to improve the quality of GHG inventory data.

## Cabo Verde

### ELEVATING GENDER

Cabo Verde's first NDC did not include gender dimensions. The updated NDC recognizes vulnerable groups and notes that connections between gender and climate policy and planning have not been institutionalized in Cabo Verde. Nonetheless, the NDC indicates that inclusive and gender-sensitive strategies are needed to enhance adaptive capacity and that women's economic empowerment is key to making progress on gender equality. The NDC highlights that a National Adaptation Plan (NAP) will systematically link vulnerable groups, gender and climate. Meanwhile, the NDC commits to creating a strong platform for gender-sensitive climate empowerment and in turn identifies gender-sensitive targets and measures for both adaptation (agriculture, oceans and coastal zones, and disaster risk reduction) and mitigation (energy and agriculture, forestry and land-use). UNDP's Climate Promise helped facilitate these inclusivity aspects through support to develop a sectoral Gender Analysis and a Climate Change and Gender Action Plan. As a result, the Caboverdian Institute of Gender Equality and Equity is now a partner institution for NDC implementation. A study on the socio-economic impacts of NDC targets and measures was also supported and utilized during the NDC revision process.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF CLIMATE PROMISE SUPPORT TO DATE

## Finance and investment

Across Africa, around 20 countries are developing financing strategies or investment plans. Recognizing the importance of mobilizing resources from the private sector to finance NDC implementation, six countries are taking action to strengthen private sector involvement. In **Sierra Leone**, workshops were supported at the sub-national level with private sector including actors from mining and timber-logging companies. Five workshops were held in different regions of the country and were co-organized by Sierra Leone's Environmental Protection Agency and UNDP. The grassroots dialogue aimed to garner support and enhance ownership of the NDC from private sector companies and major energy consumers. In **Gabon**, a study was undertaken that assessed costs and opportunities in the timber, oil, and mining sectors, taking into consideration the private sector. The study aimed to review the alignment of sectoral policies for the implementation of the NDC and the economic analysis of advantages to consider when integrating climate change in sectoral development policies and programs.

## Transparency

Fifteen countries are building and updating MRV systems, including 10 of which undertook actions to strengthen gender dimensions in the system, such as integrating gender-responsive indicators. In **Uganda**, an integrated MRV tool includes gender-disaggregated data and gender indicators in addition to tracking key adaptation and mitigation actions and climate finance flows.

## Mainstreaming and aligning NDCs with development agendas and the SDGs

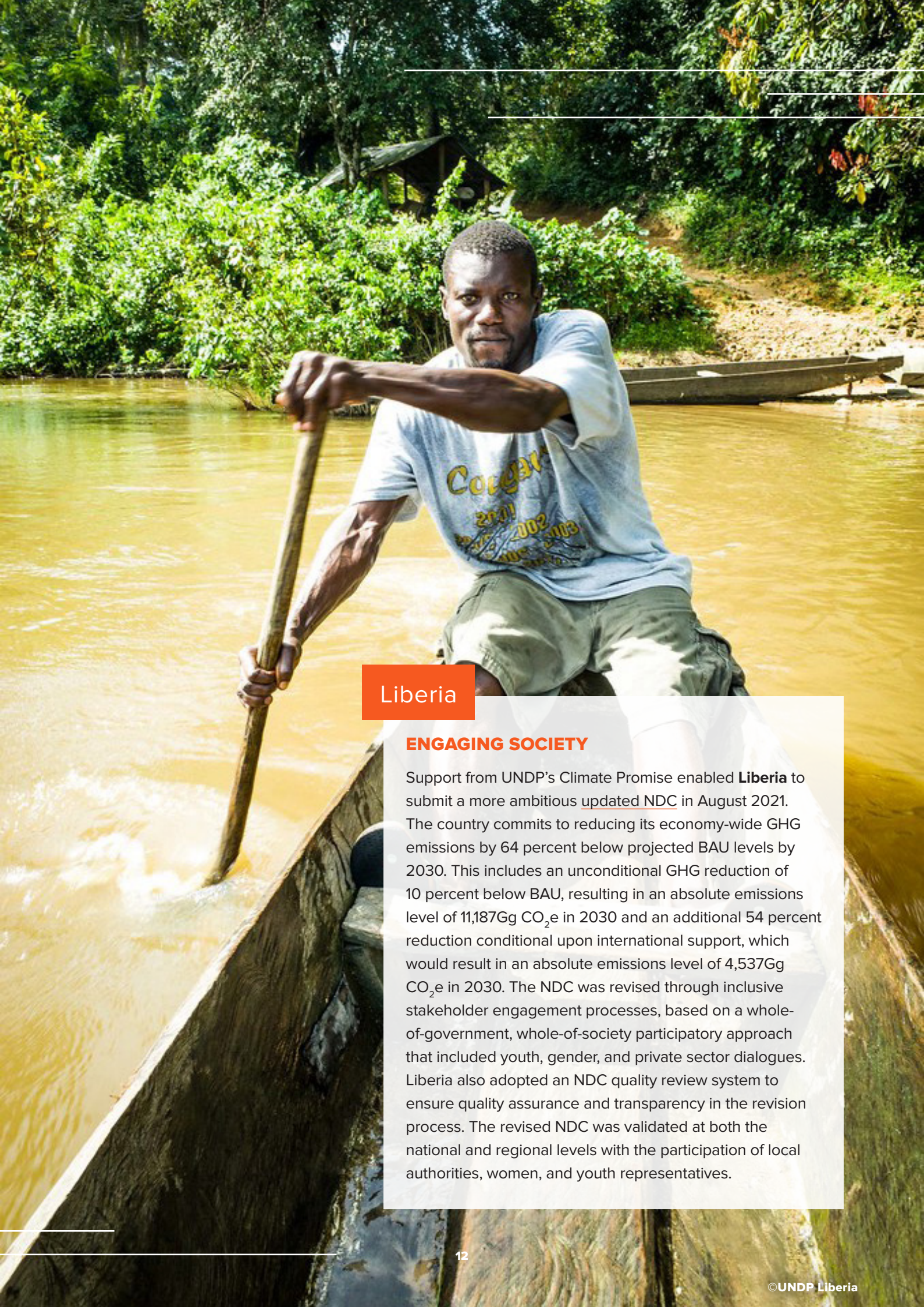
Approximately 11 countries are being supported to take steps to mainstream NDC targets and climate action into national, subnational or sectoral development plans. Acknowledging the inherent links between NDCs and SDGs, 13 countries are taking action to align these implementation processes with the understanding that such alignment will accelerate progress under both agreements. In **Tanzania**, a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder's technical meeting was held to

align the NDC with the SDGs using the [SDG Climate Action Nexus \(SCAN\) tool](#). The training was provided by a UNDP technical team, with support from the tool developers, who provided full access to the tool. Participants covered a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives from Zanzibar.

## Societal ownership and inclusivity

Across Africa, 19 countries undertook gender analysis to better understand legal, policy and institutional frameworks related to climate change and gender, to identify gaps, barriers and constraints for gender mainstreaming, and to propose priority actions to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the NDCs. In **South Africa**, while the report has yet to be fully validated, the country completed a comprehensive Gender and Institutional Analysis in October 2021. The report makes specific recommendations for mainstreaming gender in climate change policy, and in particular NDC implementation. It highlights the need to strengthen coordination by formalizing relations between the Department of Fisheries, Forests and Environment and the national gender machinery. As of 15 June 2022, out of the 39 enhanced NDCs submitted from Climate Promise supported countries in the African region, 38 included gender dimensions.





## Liberia

### ENGAGING SOCIETY

Support from UNDP's Climate Promise enabled **Liberia** to submit a more ambitious [updated NDC](#) in August 2021. The country commits to reducing its economy-wide GHG emissions by 64 percent below projected BAU levels by 2030. This includes an unconditional GHG reduction of 10 percent below BAU, resulting in an absolute emissions level of 11,187Gg CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030 and an additional 54 percent reduction conditional upon international support, which would result in an absolute emissions level of 4,537Gg CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030. The NDC was revised through inclusive stakeholder engagement processes, based on a whole-of-government, whole-of-society participatory approach that included youth, gender, and private sector dialogues. Liberia also adopted an NDC quality review system to ensure quality assurance and transparency in the revision process. The revised NDC was validated at both the national and regional levels with the participation of local authorities, women, and youth representatives.

In addition to the support needs identified above, the following trends are emerging in the region according to UNDP analysis:

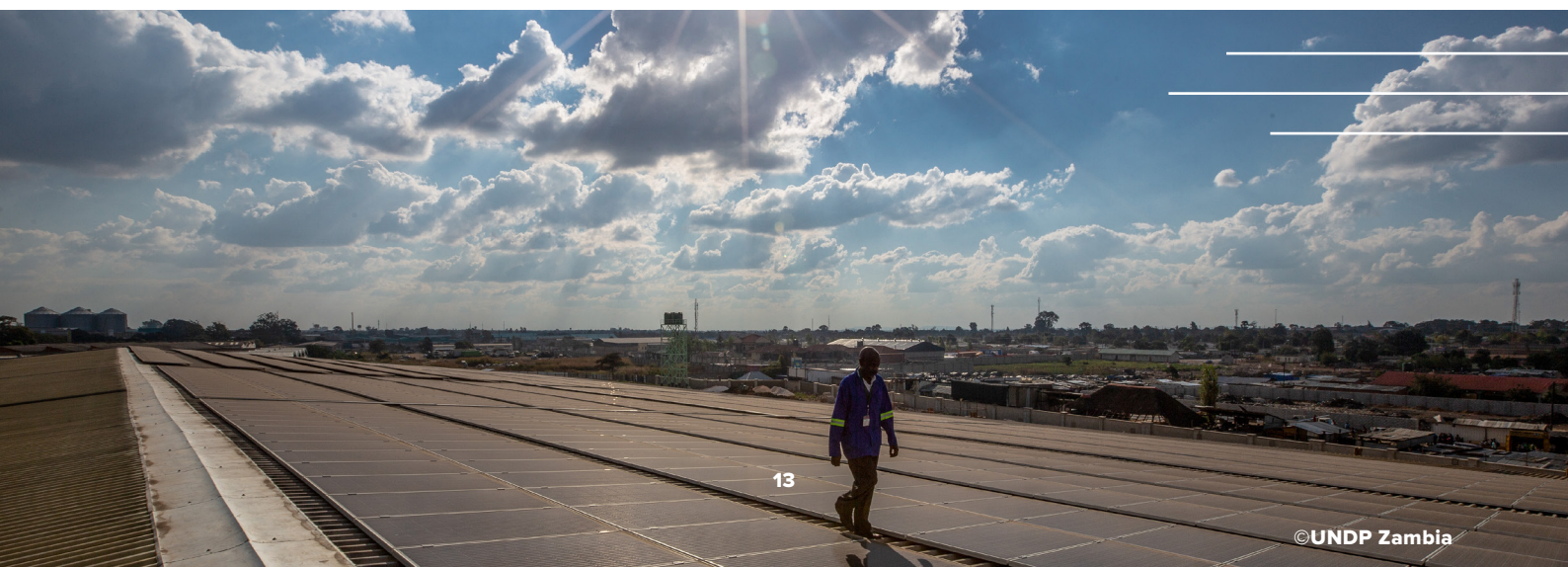
**Green jobs and just transition** are emerging themes gaining interest across the region. Ensuring an inclusive and equitable shift towards low-carbon economies is paramount in Africa, where multidimensional poverty, disparities in equality, and large youth populations are ever present. Heads of state from Senegal, Rwanda, Nigeria and South Africa are clearly expressing the need for Africa to be an active stakeholder in the debate around defining “just transition”. Leading to COP27 in Egypt, the idea of the continent agreeing on a common position is making headway. Acknowledging that climate action must benefit all of society and particularly those most vulnerable, **Nigeria** and **Zimbabwe** undertook green jobs and just transition-related activities to inform their revised NDCs. UNDP partnered with the International Labor Organization to support both countries to strengthen quantitative data around just transition scenarios through [green jobs assessment modelling](#). This work is now being scaled up in other countries, such as **Benin**, **Burkina Faso**, and **Mali**, under the second phase of UNDP’s Climate Promise.

**Climate finance and carbon markets:** Access to finance continues to be a key challenge and priority for African countries, who have expressed massive financial support needs that extend far beyond the scope of countries’ available resources but also struggle to address investment barriers (both real and perceived). If countries are to meet their climate commitments and meaningfully increase climate

resilience, then finance at scale is required from all available sources, including public grants, private sector investments, and innovative approaches such as green and blue bonds – as well as leveraging a key role in protecting forests. Mitigation accounts for the largest share of reported NDC needs in 2020-2030, primarily for transport and energy<sup>14</sup>. In this context, African countries are increasingly demanding capacity building to ensure that they have the required capacity to provide the necessary financial incentives through Article 6 cooperative approaches and mechanisms which can facilitate private sector investment in climate change mitigation. Countries tapping Climate Promise support for this work include **Cote d’Ivoire**, **Kenya**, **Liberia**, **Namibia**, **Nigeria** and **Uganda**.

**Green hydrogen** has been garnering interest in **West Africa**, as evidenced by the work of the ECOWAS Center for Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency and the West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use to develop a regional policy on green hydrogen. The objective is to provide a roadmap for West African countries to effectively and directly benefit from the emerging market by tapping into local green hydrogen sources.

**Sub-national ownership of NDCs:** After countries such as **Cote d’Ivoire**, **Mali** and **Sierra Leone** showed leadership in bringing NDCs to the sub-national level, there is now more movement across the continent, such as in **Benin** and **Burkina Faso**, for more systematic engagement of urban, local, and sub-national leaders on climate targets and resilience measures.





## ENDNOTES

- 1 World Bank, 2022. [April 2022 global poverty update from World Bank.](#)
- 2 UNICEF, 2022. [Africa to drastically accelerate progress on water, sanitation and hygiene.](#)
- 3 IRENA, 2022. [Scaling Up Renewable Energy Deployment in Africa.](#)
- 4 Based on 2018 Climate Watch (CAIT) data, including Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry sector.
- 5 IPCC Sixth Assessment Report Working Group 1 [Regional Fact Sheet — Africa](#) (IPCC, 2021).
- 6 Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), 2017. [Africa Agriculture Status Report: The Business of Smallholder Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa \(Issue 5\).](#) Nairobi, Kenya: AGRA.
- 7 IPCC Sixth Assessment Report Working Group 2 [Fact Sheet — Africa](#) (IPCC, 2022).
- 8 IRENA, 2022. [Scaling Up Renewable Energy Deployment in Africa.](#)
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo (Democratic Republic), Congo (Republic), Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini (Swaziland), Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania (United Rep. of), The Gambia, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
- 11 Global results were first published in UNDP's [State of Climate Ambition Report \(2021\)](#) with data from 67 countries. This information has been updated to include data from 96 of the 99 submitted NDCs (as of 15 June 2022) from Climate Promise supported countries. Three countries submitted interim NDCs were not included in this update. For more detailed information on the methodology used, please refer to the report.
- 12 A UNDP survey on NDC implementation readiness obtained 133 developing country responses in 2019 and 122 developing country responses in 2021. The 2021 data included responses from 39 African countries supported under the Climate Promise.
- 13 Data comes from 85 percent of African Climate Promise countries that responded to a question on future support needs as part of 2021 Q4 reporting.
- 14 [Climate Policy Initiative, 2022. Climate Finance Needs of African Countries.](#)



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