

A *Monthly* from the East African Sustainability Watch Network and INFORSE East Africa

## International Summit Breaks Muteness on Clean Cooking in Africa



Leaders at the Summit on Clean Cooking (Photo: IEA)

On the 14th of May, the International Energy Agency (IEA), together with the Government of Tanzania, Norway, and the African Development Bank Group, chaired a Leaders Summit on Clean Cooking, that brought together over 1000 delegates, from governments, private sector, development partners, international organizations, philanthropies, and civil society, all driven by the shared objective of making 2024 a pivotal year for achieving universal access to clean cooking. The Summit aimed to raise the importance of clean cooking efforts at the highest levels, spark commitments and pledges and to build on the momentum and follow a roadmap for next actions (including the 2030 targets under SDG7).

The Summit came against the backdrop of the UN SDG7 Tracking report (2021) which noted that four out of ten people without access to clean cooking live in Africa and most end-users rely heavily on biomass fuels for their cooking. At COP28, the IEA declared that Africa needed an annual investment of USD 4 billion to achieve universal access to clean cooking on the continent by 2030. The IEA adds that this will require a blend of traditional and innovative finance, including carbon finance. The Clean Cooking Summit mobilized USD 2.2 billion in financial pledges from governments and the private sector. Speaking at the Summit, Samia Suluhu Hassan - The President of Tanzania called for the generous replenishment of the African Development Fund to guarantee funding for the continent's goal of ensuring universal access to clean cooking by 2030. More than 100 countries, international institutions, companies and civil society organizations endorsed *The Clean Cooking Declaration* that affirmed the importance of a coordinated approach, making progress within three critical pillars: financing, policies, and partnerships.

The Declaration also flagged out the success stories such as in Brazil, India and Indonesia which demonstrate that rapid progress is achievable if there is strong political will. 'We acknowledge the African leaders who have already made clean cooking a top priority and joined the Summit, with special thanks to President Samia Suluhu Hassan of the United Republic of Tanzania for championing clean cooking as a pan African priority through her African Women's Clean Cooking Support Programme launched at the UNFCCC COP28'. Ahead of the Summit, Kimbowa Richard (Uganda Coalition for Sustainable Development and Chairman of INFORSE East Africa) in a *Note from Kampala to the Clean Cooking Summit*, singled out the barriers to the adoption of clean cooking based on the ENACT project (2023) study in the informal Kampala settlement, namely: the high cost of stoves, the high cost of fuel and safety concerns. Similarly, African CSOs in a joint statement released on May 14, 2024 appreciated that addressing the cooking challenge must be driven by social and public responsibility, not markets. 'Public grants and concessional finance play a catalytic role in addition to and scaling up of private sector investments. Private capital can only play a role under regulated conditions', they added.

Dymphna van der Lans - the Chief Executive Officer for the Clean Cooking Alliance cautioned that, 'the Summit is not a time for half-measures or incremental progress. Mary Robinson from the Elders Forum noted that the Summit Declaration needs to be implemented as part of a cleaner just transition away from fossil fuels in the global context of climate action. 'The Summit Declaration must now be backed up with firm financial commitments to meet the US\$4 billion needed annually to deliver universal access to clean cooking in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030.' She underscored. **Read the Clean Cooking Declaration: Making 2024 the Pivotal Year for Clean Cooking:** <https://www.iea.org/news/the-clean-cooking-declaration-making-2024-the-pivotal-year-for-clean-cooking>

## World Environment Day 2024: Time for a Coherent Regional Climate Plan



The World Environment Day 2024 will focus on the critical theme of “Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience”. The theme aligns with the urgent call for action to restore degraded landscapes, protecting essential ecosystem services. Land restoration is a pivotal aspect of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), contributing significantly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 15).

A case in point for this action is that land use and land degradation - ranked as the most pressing trans-boundary environmental issue in the Lake Victoria basin (one of the world’s most densely populated areas), according to the Lake Victoria Basin Commission’s Strategic Plan (2021-26). Land degradation has been recognized as a basin wide problem referring to decline in the overall quality of soil or vegetation condition commonly caused by human activities. The poor are impacted in a number of ways including reduced agricultural yields, higher energy prices, loss of future incomes and reduced access to lands. Soil erosion leads to land degradation. Also, the conversion of forests and wetlands into agricultural or urban lands affects water flow in rivers and increase siltation thus affecting hydro power generation and creates power outages that push up energy prices. In the past four decades, over 70% of the forest cover in the catchment area has been lost, about 75% of wetland area has been significantly affected by human activities and about 13% is severely degraded.

Therefore, this year’s theme on *Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience*, is a plain reminder of what has gone wrong as evidenced in the above challenges and the increased occurrence of unfamiliar extreme weather conditions that have resulted in loss of lives and property across East Africa. When land is poorly managed, unfavorable weather conditions like el Niño find a ‘soft’ landing to worsen environmental degradation including land degradation through flash floods and loss of soil productivity due to droughts. A clear starting point is therefore urgently needed to scale up land restoration efforts in this region.

A viable start is for East African Partner States to prioritize the implementation of their National Climate Plans (Nationally Determined Contribution – NDC) especially climate change adaptation. Under the Paris Agreement, each Party is required to establish an NDC (updated every five years with ambition in mind). For example, in Rwanda’s Plan, agriculture is prioritized in terms of developing sustainable land use management practices, expanding irrigation and improve water management; while in the land and forestry sector, focus is on development of agroforestry and sustainable agriculture, promoting afforestation / reforestation of designated areas, improving forest management for degraded forest resources, harmonized and integrated spacial data management system for sustainable land use, and inclusive land administration that regulate and provide guidance for land tenure security.

On agriculture, Tanzania’s Climate Plan seeks to up scale the level of improvement of agricultural land and water resources management, increase productivity in an environmentally sustainable way through, inter alia, climate-smart agriculture interventions and to promote accessible mechanisms for smallholder farmers against climate related shocks, including crop insurances and strengthening knowledge systems, extension services and agricultural infrastructure to target climate actions, including using climate services and local knowledge.

While similar actions are also present in the Uganda’s and Kenya’s national Climate Plans, it is time a coherent regional climate plan under guidance of either the EAC or IGAD is generated to concretely address the rapidly growing borderless climate change challenge that is a key contributor to desertification and drought in East and the Horn of Africa. This will simultaneously enable focused implementation of other global commitments under Agenda 2030 (SDG15), Africa 2063 of the African Union, the UN Convention on Drought and Desertification and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework for which East African Countries are Party. Nonetheless Community Driven Development (CDD) sub-projects with a focus on livelihood improvement are potential movers to address *Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience*.

## Bonn Technical Sessions (SB60): What Next for Africa in the Run up to COP29?



A High Level Committee Event in Bonn in 2023 (Photo: IISD)

The Global Climate Change talks (COP28) that took place in Dubai from 30 November to 13 December 2023, marked the conclusion of the first ‘global stocktake’ of the world’s efforts to address climate change under the Paris Agreement. This exercise laid bare the slow progress across all areas of climate action – from reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to strengthening resilience to a changing climate, to getting the financial and technological support to vulnerable nations. But COP28 made several calls and achieved key milestone agreements

Taking these decisions forward is of interest to the forthcoming 60th sessions of the UNFCCC’s Subsidiary Bodies (SB60) due June 3-13, 2024, and follow-up meetings up to COP29 in November 2024. This includes a call on governments to speed up the transition away from fossil fuels to renewables such as wind and solar power in their next round of climate commitments. Furthermore, an agreement was reached to establish the institutional aspects of the loss and damage fund.

Also, establishing the Loss and Damage Fund was a positive step towards helping African countries disproportionately affected by climate change, with pledges amounting to US\$792 million. But, the estimated cost of addressing loss and damage on the continent between 2020 and 2030 is between US\$290 billion and US\$440 billion. This indicates that for Africa, there remains a huge gap that need to be filled. There are questions of the best way to move forward in view of these needs that touch millions of lives in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

Similarly, Africa has an interest to achieve sooner than later, a New Collective Goal of Climate Finance, a post-2025 finance objective to raise the floor of climate finance from US\$100 billion annually. The continent needs up to US\$250 billion annually until 2030 to respond effectively to climate change. But time is fast running out while the adaptation finance needs might be rising by day. Hence, Africa looks at SB60 as an opportunity to honestly take this discussion forward.

On adaptation, the heart of Africa’s climate action, all eyes are on advancement of the Global Goal on Adaptation established at COP28. For Africa, the shortfall of \$194 to \$366 billion annually (UNEP Adaptation Gap Report 2023) is a big hindrance to translate climate plans (NDCs) to concrete actions and investment opportunities. So there is an action point for SB60 as Africa need to prioritize climate adaptation to safeguard its peoples from cyclones, floods, droughts and other climate extremes.

Renewables and energy efficiency presents an opportunity for energy access and transition for Africa. The continent holds about 30% of the world’s critical mineral resources alongside abundant clean energy resources — wind and solar — that can serve as the foundation for clean industries and commodities. For example, lithium, nickel, cobalt, manganese and graphite are crucial to battery performance. The energy transition will increase the demand for these vital resources and can accelerate investments and create employment opportunities for millions on the continent. But the continent attracts only 2% of global clean energy spending. Therefore at SB60, a way forward for Africa is how to process these vital resources on the continent rather than exporting them as raw materials. Similarly, Africa should be wary of the potential critical minerals risks perpetuating commodity dependence, exacerbating geopolitical tensions and environmental and social challenges, including impacts on livelihoods, the environment, health, human security and human rights, and can undermine efforts towards the energy transition.

In sum, for Africa where climate and development are complicatedly fused, SB60 and subsequent follow up meetings need to show progress on the COP28 decisions, by answering the questions of *who* (is responsible and benefits?), *when* (given time and trends?) and *how* (clear adaptation goal and closing the resources gap?).