The Purple Coalition on Climate Change

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung



POLICY BRIEF

Recognition, Power and Access: Unlocking women-led climate mobility solutions in Africa

I- Core Message

Women and community-rooted actors are leading responses to climate-related mobility and immobility across Africa. Yet their knowledge, leadership, and solutions remain weakly recognized in climate policy and poorly resourced through adaptation finance mechanisms. The core issue is one of implementation: women's contributions are not factored into planning, decision-making, and financing processes at relevant stages—a reality confirmed by independent research and institutional data:

- At COP30, women accounted for 40% of Party delegates, while 61% of Party delegations had more men than women[1];
- Less than 3% of climate-related development assistance has gender equality as principal objective[2];
- Less than a third of climate finance includes support for local action, and less than 0.2% specifically targets locally led outcomes[3];
- Without concrete climate and development action, Africa could see as many as 105 million internal climate migrants by 2050 (86 million in Sub Saharan Africa and 19 million in North Africa).[4]

Regional institutions, governments and funders must move from acknowledging women's participation to recognising their evidence, sharing decision-making power and financing their solutions. COP31 is an opportunity to turn existing commitments into implementation. The Belém Gender Action Plan (GAP), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and Adaptation Plans (NAP), as well as loss-and-damage arrangements should be used to recognise women's evidence, strengthen their decision-making power and finance locally rooted solutions to displacement, mobility, and climate change.

II- What needs to change: Recommendations

The following actions should be advanced at COP31 and through the regional, national and financing processes that will determine how COP31 commitments are implemented.

Informed by the Purple Coalition on Climate Change (PCCC) members, this section presents COP31 recommendations to close the recognition, power, and access gaps hindering women-led climate mobility solutions in Africa.

	Recognition *Whose knowledge and losses count?*	***Power*** *Who decides?*	***Access*** *Who gets resourced?*
AU and regional entities	Support harmonised data and intersectional studies on the Gender–Climate–Mobility nexus at regional and continental level.	Create a permanent channel for women and Indigenous-led organisations to feed evidence into AU and regional policy.	Advocate within global climate finance governance (GCF, Loss and Damage Fund) for simplified, direct access for African women and Indigenous-led organisations.
National NDC/ NAP stakeholders	Integrate gendered mobility, constrained immobility, unpaid care burdens, livelihood loss and community disruption into national loss and damage assessments, response plans and funding proposals.	Establish a regular, independent mechanism for civil society to review gender integration in NDCs and NAPs and feed evidence-based recommendations into official review cycles.	Ensure finance mobilised through NDC and NAP implementation includes direct access windows for women and Indigenous-led organisations.
Donors and climate financing entities	Allow climate finance to cover childcare, safe transport, accessibility, participation time, community coordination and other care-related costs required for women to lead and participate in adaptation action.	Require transparent reporting on how much adaptation, loss, and damage finance reaches women-led and community-rooted organisations, including use of intermediaries and costs retained at each level.	Provide flexible, multi-year, core funding with simplified proposals and clear targets so women- and Indigenous-led organisations can access finance directly, without intermediaries.
Civil society and climate justice stakeholders	Learn from and amplify Indigenous knowledge in adaptation planning.	Build one shared intersectional advocacy position across feminist, Indigenous, pastoralist, migrant, displaced, youth, disability-rights and gender-minority networks.	Support grassroots and women-led organisations with the practical capacity of proposal writing, fiduciary systems, and accreditation needed to access finance directly.

III- What PCCC members are seeing: the gendered implementation gap in climate mobility policies?

The Recognition–Power–Access gaps are not theoretical. PCCC members see them playing out differently across countries and mobility contexts. Climate mobility and involuntary immobility are a defining gendered reality across Africa. Women's decisions to move or stay are shaped by care responsibilities in ways men's are not, so their mobility patterns differ substantially from men's, even as they also adapt farming, sustain trade and support displaced family members.[5] This is intensifying: Africa recorded 7.8 million climate-related displacements in 2024 alone.[6] Women's capacity to respond is constrained by several structural gaps: weak recognition of their knowledge and unpaid care work, limited power in adaptation and finance decisions, and poor access to resources, including a USD 42 billion gender finance gap.[7]

1. Flooding, food security, and women's household adaptation: Nigeria

In 2024, flooding displaced 1 million people and destroyed 1.3 million hectares of crops nationwide[8], forcing women to weigh moving to safety against staying to secure food and income for dependents. A Women Environmental Programme initiative trained women to manage drainage and reclaim abandoned farmland was recognised by the UNFCCC as a Momentum for Change activity, leading to a real change in local government drainage policy.

2. Displacement, early-warning knowledge and barriers to locally led finance: Somalia

In Q1 of 2026 alone 511,797 people were internally displaced, with 93% of these displacements drought related.[9]

Women's early-warning knowledge and mutual-aid networks shape who moves and when. Despite this frontline role, their knowledge is rarely integrated into formal systems.[10] Where formal finance excludes them, women rely on rotating savings groups to fund drought preparation[11]. According to the Green Climate Fund, Somalia currently has seven GCF-funded projects representing approximately USD 182 million in GCF financing. However, portfolio-level data do not show how much of this finance reaches local women-led organisations directly, highlighting a wider transparency and access gap.[12]

3. Pastoral mobility, care work and women's adaptation labour: Kenya

Drought forces Maasai women in Kajiado and Narok into longer water-collection journeys while men move livestock elsewhere, splitting household mobility by gender. Women are adapting through trade, kitchen gardens and savings groups. Kenya's FLLoCA is designed to channel adaptation finance to the county level, but access depends on functioning local committees where women's influence over funding decisions remains limited. [13]

4. Drought, constrained immobility, land and financial exclusion: Tunisia

Rural women make up over 70% of agricultural labour force but own under 5% of the land[14], so as drought pushes younger residents to migrate, older women are more likely to stay immobile, absorbing more unpaid care with fewer resources while remaining locked out of land-based climate finance.

IV- Where are systems failing? Aligning gender, local action, and climate finance at COP31

1. Recognition gap — women's knowledge and care work remain invisible

Recognition means making visible both the forms of labour that sustain adaptation and the forms of knowledge communities use to anticipate, respond to and recover from climate shocks. In sub-Saharan Africa, women spend on average 3.1 times as many hours on unpaid care and domestic work as men; in Northern Africa and Western Asia, the ratio rises to 4.9 times.[15] Climate change risks intensifying these burdens. For women in households without on-site water access, one study projects that warming could increase daily water-collection time by around 30% globally by 2050 under a high-emissions scenario, with increases of 20–40% in parts of eastern and central Africa.[16] The Belém Gender Action Plan now explicitly includes care work within the UNFCCC gender and climate agenda, creating a concrete entry point for addressing these inequalities through implementation.[17]

Global climate policies are shaped by reports that still lack Indigenous and traditional knowledge. At COP31, decision-makers must mandate the inclusion of Indigenous mobility data directly into official adaptation metrics and NAPs.

2. Power gap — who negotiates and who decides?

COP31 should strengthen measures that move beyond numerical participation towards women's substantive leadership in delegations, negotiating bodies and implementation processes. From the intergovernmental level down to community leadership, women are frequently excluded from formal decision-making power. The UNFCCC's 2025 report on gender composition noted that while the gender balance of its various bodies has improved over time, authority and policymaking roles remain heavily skewed toward men. [18] This pattern repeats nationally, while women play an active role in managing climate adaptations through informal community support systems, their decision-making ability in formal power systems remains limited.[19] To close this gap at COP31, decision-makers must establish mandatory gender parity rules for delegation heads, party leads, and negotiating leadership across all UNFCCC tracks.

> **"Women now have a seat at the table, but are we listened to? Does our contribution really matter?"**
>
> *Flawa Malle - Member of PCCC, during the Addis-Ababa convening, April 2026*

3. Access gap — where does the money actually go?

Access means ensuring women-led and community-rooted organisations can reach climate finance directly, on terms they can meet, with simplified procedures, flexible funding and transparency over what reaches the local level. Climate finance fails to reach the women and indigenous communities on the frontlines of climate adaptation; this is partially a problem of prioritization. Less than a third of climate finance includes support for local action, and less than 0.2% specifically targets locally led outcomes.[20] COP29 called on all actors to scale climate finance to developing countries to at least USD 1.3 trillion annually by 2035. COP31 must now help translate this ambition into accessible finance for locally led and women-led adaptation.[21]

V- The Purple Coalition on Climate Change (PCCC's): What we offer

PCCC's Offer & Call for partnership

We're a pan-African, women-led think-and-do-tank that stands to bridge evidence, policy and practice.

PCCC offers partners a coalition for translating frontline evidence into climate policy and practice. Through our cross-country expertise, the coalition can: generate and synthesise evidence from women-led and community-rooted actors; while advancing greater recognition, decision-making power and access to resources for women-led and community-rooted solutions.

PCCC is seeking partnerships with governments, regional institutions, funders, research organisations and climate actors that want to strengthen recognition, decision-making power and access to finance for women-led climate mobility solutions.

Contact Us at:

Email: wendy.indira@samuelhall.org

Website: https://www.samuelhall.org/publications/the-purple-coalition-on-climate-change-pccc/

Tel: +254 722463016

Linkedin: https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-purple-coalition-on-climate-change/posts/?feedView=all

Endnotes

1 Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), "Quick Analysis," Gender Climate Tracker, updated November 2025.

2 OECD, Development Finance for Gender Equality and Climate Action (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2022).

3 Treichel, P., Joshi, R., Taylor, E.N., Ridout, M., Mitchell, P. & Acuda, A., Locally Implemented or Locally Led? Tracking Finance for Community Climate Action (London: IIED, 2025).

4 Clement, V., Rigaud, K.K., de Sherbinin, A., Jones, B., Adamo, S., Schewe, J., Sadiq, N. & Midgley, A. Groundswell Part 2: Acting on Internal Climate Migration. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2021. And World Bank. Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2018.

5 UNDP, "Women Can Lead Africa's Climate Adaptation and Ensure the Sustainability of Livelihoods" (UNDP Africa, 2025); UNDP and Samuel Hall, "Leading the Way: Women Navigating Climate Change, Mobility and Resilience in Africa."

6 Ecofin Agency, "Africa Sees 7.8 Million Climate Displacements in 2024" (Ecofin Agency, 2025).

7 UN Women Africa, "Women's Access to Green Finance in Africa: Advocacy Messages" (UN Women Africa, 2024).

8 UN OCHA, Nigeria: 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (January 2026); Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation (April 2025); NAERLS, 2024 Wet Season Agricultural Performance Survey (October 2024).

9 UNHCR, Somalia PSMN Quarterly Report: January–March 2026 (June 25, 2026).

10 UNDP Somalia, "Gender and Climate Change Adaptation Toolkit" (2025)

11 International Rescue Committee, "You Don't Save Alone: Meet the Women's Savings Collectives in Somalia" (2026); Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) and Samuel Hall, What Works? Solutions from the Start of Cyclical Climate-Induced Displacement in Somalia (ReDSS, 2025).

12 Green Climate Fund, "Somalia Country Profile" (2026).

13 National Treasury of Kenya, "FLLoCA Disclosures,"

14 La Via Campesina, "Tunisia's Agricultural Crisis Stems from a Governance Model That Converts Sovereignty into Dependency" (May 16, 2025).

15 UN Women and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024 (New York: United Nations, 2024).

16 Carr, R. et al., "Climate change to exacerbate the burden of water collection on women's welfare globally," Nature Climate Change (2024).

17 UNFCCC, Belém Gender Action Plan (2026–2034), decision adopted at COP30, Belém, 2025.

18 UNFCCC Secretariat. Gender Composition: Report by the Secretariat. Bonn: UNFCCC, 2025.

19 United Nations. "Why Women Are Key to Climate Action." United Nations Climate Action.

20 Treichel, P., Joshi, R., Taylor, E.N., Ridout, M., Mitchell, P. & Acuda, A., Locally Implemented or Locally Led? Tracking Finance for Community Climate Action (London: IIED, 2025).

21 UNFCCC, New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance, decision adopted at COP29, Baku, 2024.

Imprint

Publisher

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
African Migration Policy Center
Yeka Subcity, Woreda 05, Block No.03,
House No. 109
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
info.ampc@fes.de

Publishing department

The Purple Coalition on Climate Change

Author

Ilham Siba

Co Author

Mercy k Ndongoli

Contact

Susanne Stollreiter
susanne.stollreiter@fes.de

Design/Layout
Optal Communication and Technology PLC

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e.V. (FES). Commercial use of the media published by the FES is not permitted without the written consent of the FES. FES publications may not be used for eletion campaign purposes.

Published October 2026
© The Purple Coalition on Climate Change.

Further publications of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung can be found here:
↗ ampc.fes.de/publications





