

SA welcomes COP28 agreement global adaptation efforts on climate change

South Africa has welcomed the landmark decision to adopt a Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) at this year's United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP28) in Dubai.



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According to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, this is something the country together with the African continent and other vulnerable nations has struggled to achieve for many years.

“The decision recognises different theme areas for adaptation action, it has measurable and time-bound targets. It also recognises the importance of securing adequate public finance for adaptation from developed countries. This is a big step forward,” said Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, Barbara Creecy.

According to reports, the GGA is part of the Paris Agreement designed to “ensure an adequate adaptation response” to protect people, livelihoods and ecosystems as the world aims to keep warming “well below” 2 Celsius or even to 1.5 Celsius.

In this context, South Africa welcomed the language in the Global Stocktake, which recognises and underscores that the impacts of climate change will be much lower at the temperature increase of 1.5 degrees compared with 2 degrees.

The two-week COP28 conference which wrapped up on Tuesday, adopted a new fund to help poor nations cope with costly climate disasters.

“Throughout our facilitation of the Global Stocktake, South Africa emphasised that climate ambition must be balanced across mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation. We also emphasised that equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities should underpin all asks on developing countries,” the Minister added.

Accordingly, South Africa said it was pleased by the decision on the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund, Just Transition Pathways work programme, the Mitigation Work Programme and the GGA.

“These decisions are in line with our national framework on Just Transition, in particular the recognition of a country’s right to pursue its climate resilience path in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

“For the first time we have language which calls for transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner to achieve net zero by 2050 in keeping with the science,” the Minister added.



#COP28: South Africa's climate change regime and just energy transition "stocktake"

5 Dec 2023



COP28 has adopted a decision, co-facilitated by South Africa, to implement the new work programme on Just Transition Pathways.

The decision underscores the importance of finance, technology development and transfer and capacity-building support to achieve just and equitable transitions, nationally and globally.

This all-of-society and all-of-economy transition approach represents a progression and evolution in the international community’s collective understanding of just transitions, that in the past tended to focus narrowly on only the energy sector and related workforce issues.

South Africa particularly welcomed the strong human rights, inclusive and participatory approach in the decision to nationally defined just transitions, in which all stakeholders have a role to play and the right to development is respected.

Climate justice

This, according to the department, is fundamental to the achievement of climate justice, at both the national and international level.

“We are also pleased that the final text takes a stand against unilateral measures such as Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism. The decision emphasises that unilateral measures should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade,” the department added.

Instead, the decision calls for greater cooperation and support aimed at achieving sustainable economic growth and development in all countries, thus enabling them to address the problem of climate change better.

“The decisions lay out a clear process to move forward current discussions on the new finance goal for the post-2025 era. It mandates that the new goal should aim at achieving parity between mitigation and adaptation finance.”

The decision underscores the importance of reforming the multilateral financial architecture. It also calls for scaled-up support for climate action from multilateral financial institutions through grant-based and concessional instruments,” it said.

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