

Social Contract for Ghana's Political and Economic Transformation

Article V

Climate Change

*The Citizens' Convention for Ghana's Political and Economic Transformation took place in Accra on June 18-19, 2024, drawing 510 participants representing numerous stakeholder groups from civil society, government and business. Building on 18 months of research and nationwide engagements, participants agreed on specific goals and targets for the seven key issue areas underpinning the Compact and **Citizens' Declaration for a Social Contract with the Government of Ghana**, which the convention adopted by acclamation. The issue areas are: gender equality, youth employment and skills, vision and planning, fiscal responsibility, private sector development, climate change, and health.*

Background

Over the past three decades, Ghana has seen increasing temperatures, erratic rainfall, and repeated flooding. The temperature variations tend to be higher in northern Ghana than in the southern and middle belts. The data also indicate relatively intense rainfall patterns, especially in southern Ghana. The result is vulnerability to mixed weather scenarios, with frequent dry spells as well as floods. The World Bank estimates that since 1960, the number of sweltering days in Ghana has increased by 13 percent, and the number of hot nights has increased by 20 percent. Over the same period, the average rainfall per decade has declined by 2.4 percent. The World Bank further estimates that the number of hotter days and nights is likely to increase by between 18 percent and 59 percent by 2050. These trends imply that the country is expected to be hotter and drier over the long term if critical steps are not taken to address the climate risk.

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) remain one of the primary drivers of the climate crisis. Since 1990, Ghana's GHG emissions have risen from 25.34 MtCO_{2e} to about 42.15 MtCO_{2e} in 2016. The increased emissions come from the energy industries, transportation, deforestation, and *galamsey* (illegal mining). If this issue is not addressed, it will worsen climate-related effects such as water scarcity, food insecurity, and deteriorating biodiversity.

Given that 52 percent of the population is involved in agriculture, the climate crisis seriously threatens the lives and livelihoods of many people in Ghana. Climate change will lead to a decline in soil quality, increased aridity, and destructive rainfall patterns, leading to massive disruption of crop production and human settlements. For example, in 2023, high temperatures and heavy rainfall caused a significant decline in cocoa production, resulting in Ghana failing to meet its targets despite a surge in global cocoa prices. Additionally, the rising temperature levels and erratic rainfall severely threaten the country's energy security since hydropower contributes about a third of energy needs. The last time Ghana suffered a severe energy crisis was in 2014–2016, and it wiped out an estimated 2 percent of GDP, indicating the damaging effect of the climate crisis if urgent steps are not taken to address it.

Because Ghana's agriculture is primarily rain-fed, climate change will reduce the production of critical food staples such as plantain, maize, beans, and rice. By the middle of this century, the World Bank estimates that maize production is likely to decline by 7 percent, and cassava yields may fall by about

28 percent in the last quarter of the century. Climate change will also increase the incidence of pests and diseases, which will likely result in crop failures. Additionally, the flooding and droughts may increase the occurrence of diseases such as cholera, malnutrition, diarrhea, and malaria. Coastal areas are vulnerable to sea-level rise, and many places along the coast (for example, in the Volta Region) have already have lost farmlands and dwellings due to sea-level rise and flooding.

Ghana has submitted 31 mitigation and adaptation measures in its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as part of the Paris Agreement. Key challenges in achieving the NDCs include the lack of a comprehensive plan to help farmers adapt to climate change; improving access to climate finance; and implementing gender-sensitive adaptation and mitigation measures. Farmers can be assisted to adapt to climate change through the use of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) to improve productivity and build resilience. Ghana has been promoting CSA for well over a decade, and appropriate new technologies need to be identified and scaled up. Farmers also face challenges such as low access to credit, land tenure insecurity, limited access to land, and inadequate infrastructure such as irrigation, rural roads, and storage facilities.

Ghana faces a high financing deficit due to poor revenue mobilization. The total cost of meeting Ghana's NDCs between 2020 and 2030 is estimated at US\$22 billion, of which only US\$5.5 billion (about 25 percent) can be met from domestic sources, which means that the financing gap must be met from external sources. The climate emergency is also likely to deepen the discrimination women face in accessing critical assets such as land, modern farm inputs, credit, and extension services. When families migrate due to drought caused by climate change, men are more likely to secure assets such as land and earn income. However, women are likely to be poor, especially in female-headed households, because they are relatively constrained in terms of income-earning opportunities. Another result is that girls are more likely to be deprived of education when families lose assets and income due to the climate crisis.

Alongside the above issues, a cross-section of Ghanaians raised a number of critically pertinent concerns at the Citizens' Convention organized in Accra by ACET on June 18-19, 2024. They called for a clear policy framework and mechanisms for transparent and accountable access to and use of climate funds with adequate oversight to promote the sustainability of projects such as tree planting. They stressed the need for increased public education and sensitization on climate issues. The combination of climate education at all levels of schooling and public awareness campaigns that involve traditional leaders and the media would facilitate more positive perceptions of climate issues and behavioral change. Participants also called for actionable research towards climate programs tailored to local needs.

Actions and targets to build climate change resilience

1. Helping farmers to adapt to climate change

Issue: Widespread illegal farming practices and weak enforcement of regulations

- **Action:** Scale up farmer education on sustainable, climate-smart agricultural practices through radio and TV shows and extension services and develop appropriate facilities.
- **Target 1:** By 2027 achieve widespread adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices.
- **Target 2:** By 2029, upgraded and expanded rural roads and other public infrastructure, and development of irrigation and storage facilities in all districts.

2. Increased access to climate finance

Issue: Heavy dependence on the government for climate-related funding and lack of engagement of private sector and civil society organizations (CSO) with climate change issues.

- **Action:** Build a network of collaboration between CSOs, ministries, businesses organizations, development banks, the media and foreign partners to engage with local communities, smallholder farmers and the private sector to build awareness of climate-related business opportunities, and local and international sources of funding.
- **Target 1:** By 2027, build capacity of local communities to prepare bankable projects
- **Target 2:** By 2027, increase private sector awareness of business opportunities in climate mitigation and adaptation.
- **Target 3:** By 2029, establish a financing framework targeted at smallholder farmers.
- **Target 4:** By 2029, set up portfolios of green loans and bonds to raise more climate finance.

3. Gender-sensitive climate adaptation and mitigation program of action

Issue: The climate emergency is likely to deepen the discrimination women face in accessing critical assets such as land, modern farm inputs, credit, and extension services.

- **Action:** Tackle gender inequality in all sectors by, among other measures, enacting the Affirmative Action Bill (pending since 1998) and enabling through a Legislative Instrument (LI) the full implementation of the Land Act, 2020 (Act 1036).
- **Target 1:** By 2026, establish a national climate gender sensitization program that mainstreams women's needs in climate action decision making.
- **Target 2:** By 2026, ensure that at least two women are on the planning and implementation committees of national adaptation measures at all levels.
- **Target 3:** By 2029, ensure full participation of women in decision making on climate mitigation and adaptation measures.
- **Target 4:** By 2029, ensure timely and accurate gender-responsive reporting of the vulnerabilities and disasters caused by climate change.