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10 Years Since the Paris Agreement in East Africa and the Indian Ocean

This Economic Letter provides an overview of climate policies and actions in the East Africa and Indian Ocean (EAIO) region ten years after the Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change.

Adopted by 196 parties at COP21, the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris on 12 December 2015, the Agreement entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its primary objective is to keep “the increase in global average temperature well below 2°C” while pursuing efforts “to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.” The Paris Agreement marked a major milestone in multilateral climate action, as it was the first binding agreement bringing together all nations to combat climate change and adapt to its effects.

Ten years on, countries in East Africa and the Indian Ocean have demonstrated genuine climate ambition, driven by regional leaders. This ambition has translated into strengthened Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and more robust national policies. However, the region still faces three major challenges: structural vulnerabilities to climate change, insufficient mobilised financing, and the need to reconcile demographic growth, economic development and the ecological transition. The credibility of regional climate pathways will therefore largely depend on the ability of international partners to meet their financial commitments and support these economies over the long term in adapting to climate change.

The East Africa and Indian Ocean region is highly vulnerable to climate change

The EAIO region is among the most vulnerable in the world to climate change. According to the 2023 ND-GAIN¹ Index, which assesses countries' vulnerability and readiness to climate change, most countries in the region rank below 120th place. Mauritius and Seychelles are the two exceptions (ranking 44th and 78th respectively). Burundi, Madagascar, Sudan and Eritrea are among the 15 most vulnerable and least prepared countries. This vulnerability reflects both high exposure to natural disasters and limited adaptive capacity. In economies where agriculture remains central and employs a large share of the population, climate shocks directly threaten food security and can generate significant economic losses. Kenya is already experiencing the impacts of climate change, with estimated annual losses ranging between 3% and 5% of GDP. In Tanzania, economic losses are estimated at between 1% and 2% of GDP per year.

¹ Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index (ND-GAIN), ND-GAIN Country Index, University of Notre Dame, 2023

Climate change also has severe social consequences. Recent deadly flood events across several countries illustrate these risks. Demographic pressure and weak infrastructure further exacerbate vulnerability. The region also presents a paradox: despite its high exposure to climate risks, it contributes very little to global greenhouse gas emissions. **The EAIO region accounts for less than 1% of global emissions, while Africa as a whole contributes only 3% to 4%.**

Uneven implementation of the Paris Agreement across the region

The implementation of the Paris Agreement across the region remains uneven. Eight out of fifteen countries have officially submitted their NDCs, according to the official registry of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). However, several countries are at advanced stages of updating their NDCs, including the Comoros and Uganda. Kenya has been particularly proactive, becoming one of the first African countries to update its NDC as early as April 2025.

At the multilateral level, Kenya, Ethiopia and Rwanda stand out as regional leaders. The organisation of the second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2) by Ethiopia in September 2025, in partnership with the African Union, following the first edition held in Kenya in 2023, highlights the region's growing leadership in climate matters. **In 2027, Ethiopia will host COP32,** following Durban (2011) and Johannesburg (2006). This will be only the third COP held in Sub-Saharan Africa and the first in the EAIO region. It is expected that this COP will follow the approach observed at ACS2, focusing on climate justice, increased financing for adaptation, sustainable development financing, and investments in the energy transition.

Significant investment needs to implement NDCs

The implementation of NDCs in the EAIO region requires substantial investment. The 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), held in Azerbaijan in November 2024, concluded with an agreement calling on developed countries to provide USD 300 billion per year to developing countries by 2035. However, financing needs far exceed these commitments.

The EAIO region therefore faces significant challenges in financing its ecological transition. In some cases, the financial requirements for implementing national NDCs exceed national GDP, such as in Burundi or South Sudan. Funding mainly comes from multilateral development banks (World Bank, African Development Bank), bilateral donors, and UNFCCC funds such as the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund. Countries are also exploring innovative instruments, including green bonds, debt-for-nature swaps, and carbon markets. Despite these efforts, the gap between estimated needs and actual financing remains substantial.

France's role and growing regional influence

France is a key partner in the region through its financial instruments, including the French Development Agency (AFD), the French Treasury, and the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM). French support is particularly focused on energy, green mobility, climate finance, sustainable cities, and biodiversity.

The EAIO region is also strengthening its international influence on climate issues through the hosting of major events. Energy transition and green industrialisation will be key themes of the **Africa Forward Summit**, co-organised by France and Kenya in Nairobi on 11–12 May 2026. Kenya will also host the 11th Our Ocean Conference in Mombasa in June 2026.