

# ACS@ONE REFLECTIONS REPORT 2024

## KEY FINDINGS AND STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

DEEP DIVE REFLECTIONS ON KEY THEMATIC  
AREAS ONE YEAR POST THE  
INAUGURAL AFRICA CLIMATE SUMMIT (ACS) 2023

JACOB'S LADDER AFRICA DECEMBER 2024





## INTRODUCTION

The Africa Climate Summit at One (ACS@ONE), Kenya's first CSO-led post-summit convening, built on the inaugural Africa Climate Summit (ACS) 2023, where Kenya and the African Union Commission brought together over 30,000 participants from 130+ countries to discuss green growth and climate finance solutions.

Held between November–December 2024, ACS@ONE provided a critical platform for ecosystem actors to review progress on commitments made under the Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action, one year after the inaugural Summit. The convenings focused on sectoral implementation and actionable strategies, reinforcing Kenya's leadership in Africa's green transition.

Jacob's Ladder Africa, in collaboration with valued partners and stakeholders, convened six thematic convenings in Nairobi and, through virtual webinars, engaged government, civil society organisations, development partners, academia, the private sector, youth and children. Additional contributions from across Africa were received through virtual sessions, ensuring diverse perspectives were integrated into this report and strengthening its continent-wide relevance.

The ACS@ONE convenings also served as a timely bridge between post-COP29 outcomes and COP30, Kenya's ongoing multi-stakeholder climate commitments, and preparations for the Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2) in September 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, aligning national efforts with Africa-wide ambitions.

### The convenings were structured around the following thematic area

- **Natural Capital and Natural Asset Utilisation:** The session focused on reviewing progress and accountability in implementing the Nairobi Declaration commitments on natural capital, and making actionable recommendations to support the sustainable use of natural assets for low-carbon development and global decarbonisation.
- **Energy Transitions:** This session explored Kenya's current energy landscape, assessed progress toward commitments made under the Nairobi Declaration, and offered strategic recommendations to accelerate the realisation of its outcomes.
- **Green Transitions and Industrialisation:** Participants reviewed progress on Nairobi Declaration commitments related to renewable energy, green transitions, and sustainable industrial practices, identifying opportunities for scaling impact.
- **Capital and Finance for Low-Carbon Development and Climate Action:** Leaders reflected on financial reforms and mobilisation efforts aligned with the Nairobi Declaration. The session issued a call to action for restructuring financial systems, improving debt management, and unlocking capital for climate action and sustainable development.



- **Adaptation and Resilience:** The session emphasised climate-smart agriculture, indigenous knowledge, and inclusive, accessible climate education and communication as key to strengthening community resilience and adaptation across Africa.
- **Youth and Children Inclusion in Climate Action:** The session highlighted the importance of investing in youth capacity, expanding access to climate finance, and ensuring meaningful participation in policy, natural resource management, green jobs, and renewable energy, while also supporting youth-led innovation and inclusive governance.

In collaboration with multi-sector organisations (annexed), each theme generated concrete policy recommendations to guide strategic action and investment priorities.

This report consolidates **key recommendations** ahead of the Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2) in September 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Jacob's Ladder Africa aims to play a catalytic role in shaping the summit's agenda by championing green job creation and amplifying diverse African voices to foster collaboration on the continent's most urgent climate and development priorities.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Natural Asset and Natural Asset Utilisation:

- **Policy Reform for Conservation and Livelihoods:** Kenya must develop and implement policies that incentivise conservation and sustainable resource management, grounded in the lived realities of local communities and linked to livelihood opportunities.
- **Data-Driven Interventions:** The effective use of data and research is essential for designing targeted natural capital and asset interventions, improving planning and resource allocation.
- **Integrated Resource Planning:** Investments should prioritise integrated approaches that link environmental outcomes with health and population programs for holistic impact.
- **Promote Behaviour Change:** Behaviour change initiatives are key to shifting societal attitudes toward nature, sustainability, and responsible resource use.
- **Nature in Trade Agreements:** There is a need to mainstream environmental considerations into trade agreements such as AGOA, ensuring nature is reflected in economic policies.
- **Establish Knowledge and Investment Hubs:** A national bio-economy learning hub should be established to support natural capital accounting and knowledge sharing. Additionally, investment hubs (e.g., FSD-Africa CAPE) can facilitate financing for nature-positive ventures.



- **Jobs and Nature Nexus:** Green jobs in the bio-economy—especially those at the intersection of youth, technology, and nature—present significant opportunities for employment and innovation.
- **Sustainable Shipping and Compliance:** Kenya should support the greening of the shipping sector through the adoption of alternative fuels and full implementation of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) climate regulations.

## Energy Transitions

- **Policy and Investment:** Kenya needs to fast-track the electric mobility session paper and harmonise its energy policy mix (e.g., coal vs. renewables) to create a clear, enabling environment for investment in decarbonization. Accurate data and science should inform policy development, and cross-sector partnerships, including financial institutions, must commit to implementation.
- **Regional and Global Cooperation:** Kenya should join the Africa Circular Economy Alliance, integrate circularity into its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and lead in harmonising regional energy policies with neighbouring countries (Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania) to accelerate energy integration and capacity-building.
- **Clean Cooking Technologies:** Behaviour change campaigns and sectoral integration, such as with health, are critical to scale clean cooking. Expanding clean fuel options like biogas, bioethanol, and electric cooking, especially in rural areas, will support a just energy transition.
- **Renewable Energy and Equity:** Scaling up renewable energy must involve local communities and prioritise shared ownership. National policies should embed energy equity to ensure inclusive access and benefit-sharing.
- **Fossil Fuels:** Rather than solely removing fossil fuel subsidies, Kenya and partners should promote alternatives, including the development of a green hydrogen economy.
- **Incentives:** Zero-rating second-hand electric vehicles, especially four-wheelers, was recommended to boost electric mobility adoption.

## Green Transitions and Industrialisation

- **Climate-Positive Investments:** Kenya must accelerate the completion of integrated public transport systems (e.g., Nairobi BRT, integrated rail), strengthen sustainable extraction of natural resources like geothermal, and develop innovative financing models such as blended finance to de-risk green investments. Community participation must be embedded in planning to ensure local benefits, job creation, and social buy-in.



- **Policy Implementation and Regulatory Alignment:** There is a need for the practical implementation of existing green transition policies. The government must commit public resources and facilitate stakeholder knowledge exchange to accelerate green investments.
- **Continental Collaboration:** Regional cooperation should focus on shared green infrastructure, nature debt swaps, economic integration through trading blocs, and cross-border data governance. Kenya is well-positioned to lead in aligning regional policies for inclusive green economies.
- **Green Skills and Human Capital:** Mapping, developing, and institutionalising green skills across the value chain is essential. Investments are needed in training infrastructure, accessible learning, academic mobility, and integration of skills strategies into NDCs for a just transition.
- **Trade and Export of Green Solutions:** Kenya must strengthen its capacity to export green technologies and solutions, implement regional integration policies, and engage in intra-African trade in green energy, especially with countries lacking renewable resources.
- **Sectoral Decarbonisation:** Key priorities include banning fossil-fuel vehicle imports, increasing blended biofuel production, incentivising sustainable energy infrastructure through tax reforms, and expanding clean cooking through carbon financing and consumer awareness campaigns

## Capital and Finance for Low-Carbon Development and Climate Action

- **Clarify and Strengthen Climate Finance Frameworks:** There is a need to clearly define terms such as climate finance to enhance transparency and accountability. Participants called for comprehensive frameworks to track the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration at sub-national levels and to raise ambition in order to access global funding streams, including the Green Climate Fund, Loss and Damage Fund, and African Development Bank.
- **Reform Global Finance Systems for Equitable Access:** Stakeholders emphasised the urgency of reforming global financial systems to reduce bureaucratic barriers and ensure that climate finance is accessible, timely, and responsive to the needs of developing countries, especially in adaptation and loss and damage.
- **Innovative and Inclusive Financing Mechanisms:** The convening advocated for a shift toward diverse, innovative, and equitable financing instruments—including carbon markets, blended finance, debt-for-nature swaps, outcome-based tools, regional insurance pools, and small grants. Capacity building to design bankable climate proposals and access new funding streams is essential.



- **Shift to Investment Plan Approaches:** Participants called for moving from a project-based model to an investment plan approach in subsequent Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), enabling better alignment with long-term development and adaptation goals.
- **African Leadership and Coherent Voice:** Coordinated political leadership at the continental level is needed to speak with one voice in global fora, advocating for debt sustainability, equitable financing, and reforms that prioritise Africa's climate needs. Internally generated revenue and policy incentives must also be mobilised to reduce external vulnerabilities.
- **Private Sector and Localised Access:** Greater private sector engagement—particularly in adaptation finance with risk-adjusted returns—is critical. Mechanisms must be established to enable local communities, small organisations, and grassroots entities to directly access small grants and micro-finance.
- **Transforming Financial Institutions and Structures:** There is a need to rethink the role of multilateral institutions by enabling concessional financing for intermediaries and leveraging national entities like Kenya's Capital Markets Authority for carbon trading. This includes building capacity for financial intermediaries to engage in scalable green finance.
- **Build Homegrown Capacity and Carbon Integrity:** Establish African-led systems to identify high-integrity carbon projects and ensure revenues support adaptation and development. Standardised regulatory and accounting frameworks should be scaled to build trust and investment confidence from the grassroots to the national level.
- **Debt Reform and Climate-Responsive Sovereign Lending:** Key proposals include a debt pause clause for countries impacted by climate shocks, broader eligibility for climate resilience clauses, and reforms to the IMF and G20 frameworks to account for climate vulnerability in sovereign lending. Advocates called for transforming credit rating criteria to include climate risk and establishing an African debt monitoring mechanism to promote transparency and accountability.

## Adaptation and Resilience

- **Scale Up Climate-Smart Agriculture:** Stakeholders emphasised the need to promote climate-smart agricultural practices through targeted incentives such as tax relief, zero-rated quality inputs, and affordable financing for SMEs. These measures would boost resilience and enhance food security.
- **Leverage Technology and Data:** Embracing technological advancements is critical for improving weather predictability and enabling farmers to make informed planning decisions amid changing climate conditions.



- **Protect Indigenous Agricultural Knowledge:** There is a call to preserve and integrate indigenous agricultural practices into national policy and seed laws, recognising their relevance for locally rooted adaptation strategies.
- **Strengthen Agricultural Infrastructure and Value Chains:** Enhancing infrastructure and improving agricultural value chains is vital to support sustainable food systems and ensure efficient production and distribution.
- **Integrate Resilience into Education:** Introducing sustainable agriculture and climate adaptation concepts into school curricula is necessary to cultivate climate-conscious mindsets from an early age.
- **Promote Inclusive Knowledge Sharing:** Adaptation strategies should incorporate indigenous and cultural knowledge, delivered in accessible formats and local languages. Faith-based organisations and community networks must be engaged to support broad-based dissemination.
- **Foster Collaborative Partnerships:** Stakeholders should form networks to share best practices, supported by accurate and verifiable information. Feedback mechanisms should be established to ensure knowledge is responsive and community-driven.

## Youth and Children Inclusion in Climate Action

- **Build Capacity for Climate Finance Access:** Grassroots training and capacity-building are essential to equip young people with the skills needed to access climate finance. Support should include proposal writing, climate adaptation, and resilience skills. A dedicated Youth Climate Finance Fund should be established with inclusive, youth- tailored financial products.
- **Promote Youth Policy Engagement and Accountability:** Governments must be held accountable for implementing youth-related climate policies. Young leaders involved in policy spaces should ensure transparent follow-up on commitments, especially regarding finance.
- **Inclusive Access to Climate Finance:** Collaboration with county officials and policymakers is necessary to ease procedural barriers and ensure that youth access to climate financing is inclusive and practical.
- **Leverage Natural Capital for Youth Empowerment:** Governments and stakeholders must prioritise youth engagement in natural capital dialogues, invest in public awareness, and create opportunities through training and research that support sustainable natural resource use.
- **Enable Green Jobs and Industrial Opportunities:** Move from policy dialogue to tangible action by training youth to access green job opportunities and implementing mentorship programs. Remove barriers such as excessive experience requirements and ensure transparency in job access and qualifications recognition.





- **Mainstream Youth in Energy Transitions:** Develop youth-inclusive policies that support participation in the renewable energy sector. Establish Youth Climate Advisory Committees, support youth-led innovations (e.g., clean cookstoves, waste- to-energy), and celebrate them through national awards.
- **Invest in Long-Term Energy Solutions:** Prioritise research and development in renewable energy, including future-focused issues like solar battery recycling, to ensure sustainability and prepare youth for emerging energy sector opportunities.

## CONCLUSION

The **ACS@ONE Reflections Report 2024: Key Findings and Strategic Outcomes**, drawn from the six thematic convenings, underscores the importance of translating climate commitments into measurable progress, while creating space for emerging alliances and investment pathways. The outcomes highlight the value of inclusive, multi-stakeholder dialogue in shaping strategies that are nationally grounded yet regionally relevant.

Looking ahead, the reflections provide a foundation for Africa's collective climate agenda, building on Kenya's ongoing commitments under the Nairobi Declaration and transitioning toward Ethiopia's leadership in hosting the Second Africa Climate Summit (ACS2) in Addis Ababa. The outcomes also support the goals of the African Union, the ACS Secretariat, and the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), contributing to future policy decisions through the Africa Climate Summit and related frameworks, while advancing the continent's sustainable development trajectory.





## ANNEX 1

**Supporting partners alongside Jacob's Ladder Africa, contributing expertise, include:**

- **Government and Policy Institutions:** Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Forestry; Office of the First Lady; and line ministries such as the National Treasury, Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy, and Sports, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, among others, along with County Government representation.
- **Various Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) & Non-State Actors:** Including Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Kenya, Mtoto News International, Swahilipot Hub Foundation, and multiple continental, national, and county-level CSOs.
- **Academic and Research Institutions:** Including Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Strathmore University, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KEMFRI), Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI), and others.
- **Private Sector and Development Partners:** UN Resident Coordinator's (UNRC) Office, International Labour Organisation, Geneva (ILO), UN Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), German Corporation (GIZ) Kenya, AGRA, Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), Food and Land Use Coalition Kenya (FOLU), African Natural Capital Alliance (ANCA), Kenya Climate Innovation Centre (KCIC), Financial Sector Deepening Africa (FSD), Microsoft, African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), among others.
- **County and Regional Contributors:** Climate Change & Air Quality Monitoring Directorate, Nairobi City County Government; Youth Affairs Directorate, Homa Bay County; County Executive Committee Member (CECM), County Government of Taita Taveta; CECM Kericho County; CECM Tana River County, along with various regional and county representatives and officers.

For further findings and insights, any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact Jacob's Ladder Africa at [acs@jacobs ladder.africa](mailto:acs@jacobs ladder.africa)



