



Natural rainwater catchment basins increase the resilience of the drought-stricken population in Kenya (WHH project Mbunyaka Rock)

## INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE POLICY AT A CROSSROADS?

### Welthungerhilfe's expectations of the climate conference in Dubai

As 2023 comes to an end with the likely title of hottest year on record, the upcoming 28th World Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai takes place under particularly worrisome auspices. Firstly, it is led by a COP presidency that represents fossil fuel interests like no other before it. And secondly, the war in Gaza/Israel is driving the global community even further apart than the war in Ukraine has already done. However, solving the climate crisis urgently requires timely multilateral cooperation with broad, meaningful economic transformation on a global scale. In view of the current global situation, however, achieving this is becoming an increasingly difficult task.

#### FROM NAIROBI TO DUBAI — JOINT ACTION BY ALL NATIONS IS ESSENTIAL

Climate change has already impacted every country in the world and poses well known risks to our wellbeing and to survival as a species. In recent years, storms, forest fires and floods have caused considerable economic losses in many countries. African countries are facing major climate-related challenges<sup>1</sup>. Extreme weather events such as widespread droughts and flooding caused by heavy rainfall leading to increased desertification, displacement, forced migration, food and hunger crises and make their societies increasingly unable to lift themselves out of poverty.

Steps to overcome this vulnerability and achieve sustainable development were discussed at length at the African Climate Summit in Nairobi in September this year, to which the Kenyan President was invited. Especially in view of the upcoming COP28 in Dubai, it is of crucial importance to overcome the divide between the global North and the global South in tackling the climate crisis. Cooperation and joint action by all nations are essential to overcome climate change.

#### THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF RESOURCES AS A PREREQUISITE FOR DEVELOPMENT IS UNDISPUTED IN AFRICA

The countries of the African continent are ready to make their contribution to climate protection by utilizing their abundant resources in renewable energies, important minerals, agricultural potential, and natural capital effectively and sustainably. With the sustainable management of their myriad resources, they can achieve their own green growth and development while meeting the global demand for renewable energy. The continent offers a range of investment opportunities for global capital to support the phase-out of fossil fuels and local economic development.

The **Nairobi Declaration**<sup>2</sup> contains a series of voluntary commitments by African countries. National policies should be designed in such a way that they attract foreign capital. Green growth should create jobs and environmentally damaging industrial processes should be skipped, ecosystems and biodiversity should be preserved and reclaimed through nature-based approaches.

Parts of African civil society<sup>3</sup> expressed doubts that the proposed measures would have a positive impact on poor and marginalized sections of the population. Thus, the African Climate Summit should have been an opportunity to present real and progressive climate action and sustainable development, to decide to phase out fossil fuels and to put African solutions and strategies at the center, not to continue to make Africa a pawn of foreign states and international corporations. Despite this criticism, the Nairobi Declaration provides the basis for Africa's common position with a view to COP28 in Dubai and beyond.

1 <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/chapter/chapter-9/>

2 <https://mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/news/Nairobi-Declaration.pdf>

3 <https://priceofoil.org/2023/09/13/civil-society-criticizes-african-climate-summit-for-promoting-false-solutions-not-fossil-fuel-phaseout/>

## OLD PROMISES MUST FINALLY BE REALISED

African states expect the countries that are primarily responsible for climate change to honor the commitments made in the past. The Nairobi Declaration thus formulates the minimum expectations of COP28: to ambitiously drive forward the reduction of greenhouse gases as part of the major stocktake, as agreed in the Paris Agreement of 2015, to provide USD 100 billion in climate financing annually (which should have been the case from 2020) and to provide the Loss-and-Damage Fund (LDF) with funds, as agreed at the World Climate Conference in Egypt last year.

## A GLOBAL STOCKTAKING IS DUE

Above all, this year's World Climate Conference will be about a global stocktake. It describes a process by which governments and interest groups can determine where they are making progress in achieving the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement - and where they are not. The stocktake takes place every five years. This first one is due to be completed in Dubai at the end of the year.

However, the synthesis report<sup>4</sup> published in September by the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change on the process to date makes it clear that the world is a long way from achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. It emphasizes that a global temperature rise of over 1.5 degrees Celsius is imminent if countries do not take more ambitious climate protection measures by the time of the second global assessment in 2028. The peak for global greenhouse gas emissions must be reached in 2025. After that, they should fall and be halved by 2030. Almost all countries, including Germany, are then obliged to step up and submit more ambitious national climate action plans through the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs).

The authors of the synthesis report not only propose targets, but also additional measures: Tripling renewable energy and doubling energy efficiency, phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies and ending deforestation globally by 2030. Only zero-emission cars would be allowed to be registered in the richer countries after 2035, with an extra five years for all other countries.

## FUNDING FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION NEEDS TO BE DOUBLED

In return, more money is to be channeled to low-income countries. The paper includes a call to double bilateral official development assistance (ODA) for climate protection from USD 30 billion in 2019 to USD 60 billion by 2025. However, achieving this seems rather unlikely, considering the current budget debates in many major donor countries.

For example, the German government is only expecting around 5.1 billion euros in budget funds for international climate financing for 2023 and around 5.3 billion euros for 2024<sup>5</sup>. The six billion pledges for 2025 (made by Federal Chancellor Scholz at COP27) are therefore likely to be out of reach. German civil society believes that a fair German contribution to international climate financing would amount at least to 8 billion euros. And the budget of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development will continue to fall in 2025, according to the German government's financial planning. However, continued funding for international climate financing is a prerequisite for progress at COP28 in Dubai. It is a credibility test for emerging economies and low-income countries.

## ADAPTATION NEEDS A GLOBAL ADAPTATION GOAL

Another issue for the negotiations in Dubai concerns the formulation of the global adaptation target set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement. The Nairobi Declaration also refers to this. The goal is intended to help improve the adaptive capacity of all countries, strengthen their resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change in order to contribute to sustainable development and ensure an adequate adaptation response. To better understand, design and ultimately achieve this goal, the signatories to the Paris Agreement established the Glasgow Sharm el-Sheikh Work Programme<sup>6</sup> at COP 26 in 2021. In Dubai, countries must now commit to setting a measurable, global adaptation target so that at least half of the affected population worldwide is protected against the effects of the climate crisis by 2030.

Adaptation support and adaptation programs must be designed in such a way that they go beyond technological solutions and aim to transform processes. They should be based on the principles for locally led adaptation<sup>7</sup> (LLA) to ensure the involvement of local actors, especially civil society actors, for the development and implementation of national adaptation plans and the design and structuring of funding. This is particularly important for establishing and maintaining food security, as many countries suffering the most from climate change are also highly food insecure.

## ADAPTATION REQUIRES INTEGRATED APPROACHES

Strategies for adapting to climate change must take the entirety of rural areas into account and require integrated approaches so that climate, species and soil protection go hand in hand with the transformation of food systems<sup>8</sup>. After all, climate change exposes food, agriculture and water systems, which are vital for human survival, to considerable risks. At the same time, the production, processing, transport, and consumption of food contribute significantly to climate change. One third of all man-made greenhouse gas emissions

4 [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/SYR\\_VIEWS%20on%20the%20Elements%20for%20CoO.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/SYR_VIEWS%20on%20the%20Elements%20for%20CoO.pdf)

5 Answer of the Federal Government to the parliamentary question – Nr. 9/392: [https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Downloads/P-R/Parlamentarische-Anfragen-Anlagen/9-392-2.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=4](https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Downloads/P-R/Parlamentarische-Anfragen-Anlagen/9-392-2.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4)

6 <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/workstreams/glasgow-sharm-el-sheikh-WP-GGGA>

7 <https://www.wri.org/initiatives/locally-led-adaptation/principles-locally-led-adaptation>

8 Siehe dazu den Welthungerhilfe Policy Brief vom Juni 2023: [https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/pictures/publications/de/position\\_papers/2023-policy-brief-nachhaltige-ernaehrungssicherheit-durch-klimaresilienz-DE-welthungerhilfe.pdf](https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/pictures/publications/de/position_papers/2023-policy-brief-nachhaltige-ernaehrungssicherheit-durch-klimaresilienz-DE-welthungerhilfe.pdf)

come from agricultural and food systems, and 70 per cent of the fresh water consumed worldwide is used for agricultural production. At last year's climate conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, the COP presidency brought the issues of climate and food security closer together. This year's conference now proposes promoting the integration of food systems and agriculture into climate protection measures and including them in relevant national policies. On December 10<sup>th</sup>, the Food, Agriculture and Water theme day will highlight how these challenges can be addressed by expanding regenerative agriculture and water and food systems to support habitat restoration and conservation, as well as by implementing more equitable and integrated coordination through multi-stakeholder partnerships, for example between states and businesses, farmers, producers and local actors. Both increase food security. Welthungerhilfe (WHH) supports and promotes such partnerships in its projects and programs.

## THE FUND FOR DAMAGES AND LOSSES

For decades, the countries of the global South, together with large sections of civil society, have been calling for the establishment of a fund to compensate for climate-induced losses and unavoidable damage. Countries and communities that are not responsible for climate change are particularly affected. The decision to set up such a fund at COP27 last year is considered historic. However, there are several challenges in operationalizing the fund, and it is unclear whether they can be resolved at COP28.



The rehabilitation of degraded dry valleys in **Ethiopia** has the potential to alleviate poverty, food insecurity and resource scarcity caused by climate change, population growth and water scarcity. A project for the rehabilitation and productive use of dry valleys offers an innovative solution to tackle the causes of land degradation, drought, hunger and poverty. Through a combination of social, technical, biological, economic, institutional and governance measures, it aims to restore the ecological balance of entire dry valleys, improve soil fertility and increase water availability in order to generate regular incomes in areas of intensive and high-value agriculture.

On the north-west coast of **Madagascar**, WHH is working with the city administration of Tulear to improve climate-friendly waste management. The project improves the public health of the citizens of Tulear and helps to protect the environment. Efficient and sustainable waste collection and disposal will reduce air emissions from open burning (dioxins) and water and soil pollution from leachate. The production of compost leads to lower greenhouse gas emissions (methane) from waste decomposition and also helps to improve soil fertility on agricultural land. Upgraded waste materials such as plastic, glass, metals, paper and organic materials are converted into new waste products or recycled. The resulting biogas and compost are used in gardening and contribute to people's food security. (There will be WHH side events on this project in the Madagascar government pavilion at COP28).



## FINANCING: WHO PAYS IN?

In the negotiations, countries such as China, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay (from the group of the largest inter-governmental group of low- and middle-income countries, the G77)<sup>9</sup> demanded that only the countries of the Global North (formerly industrialized countries) pay contributions into the fund. The industrialized countries, on the other hand, including the European Union, the United Kingdom, Norway, France, Canada, and Germany, emphasized that "all countries in a position to do so" should co-finance the fund, including China and oil-exporting countries.

## WHO GETS MONEY FROM THE FUND?

The same group of industrialized countries expects that disbursements from the fund should be limited to the least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS) and "particularly vulnerable" countries. Germany is of the opinion that the fund should not target countries that are not particularly vulnerable, whereas many emerging economies demand access to the fund, even if they are up to now less vulnerable.

<sup>9</sup> <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/parties-non-party-stakeholders/parties/party-groupings>



Civil society organisations<sup>10</sup> have proposed that the inclusion or exclusion of countries as recipients should not necessarily be decided in the negotiations on the fund's framework conditions, as this could lead to a delay or even blockade of the negotiations. Instead, it is proposed that the allocation of funds be regulated according to criteria such as vulnerability, per capita prosperity and investments in fossil fuels. This categorization could be reassessed every five years.

The latest preliminary negotiations in Abu Dhabi resulted in an agreement on a basic structure for the fund whereby even the rich Gulf states and China would not be exempt from paying into the fund, and those countries that have hardly contributed anything to climate change, such as the small island states and other least developed countries, could soon receive payments. However, this agreement still needs to be formally adopted at COP28 in Dubai<sup>11</sup>.

## FOSSIL FUEL PHASE-OUT NECESSARY

The political starting point for this climate conference is anything but favorable. However, dealing with climate change and complying with the 1.5-degree Celsius limit requires ambitious decisions by states and ongoing climate financing. The non-binding thematic declarations prepared by the COP president<sup>12</sup> notwithstanding, the negotiations at COP28 will be under immense pressure to succeed at producing courageous, feasible and actionable solutions. To this end, the focus must be on moving away from fossil fuels and a global expansion of renewable energies.

Connecting food systems transformation to the COP climate change discussions is long overdue and welcome. The need to protect and preserve ecosystems and biodiversity has thus been recognized in international climate policy, as has the conviction that food systems need to be transformed.

Serious climate policy requires clear political decisions by the countries negotiating at the Dubai COP28. An action-orientated global stocktaking is of great importance for global climate policy. What the world does not need are non-binding declarations of intent and a business-as-usual approach to fossil fuels.

10 [https://venro.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Dateien/Daten/Publikationen/Standpunkte/VENRO\\_Standpunkt\\_Fonds\\_Klimasch%C3%A4den\\_2023.pdf](https://venro.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Dateien/Daten/Publikationen/Standpunkte/VENRO_Standpunkt_Fonds_Klimasch%C3%A4den_2023.pdf)  
11 <https://taz.de/Klimakonferenz-COP28/15970805/>

12 z.B. die Emirates Declaration on Resilient Food Systems, Sustainable Agriculture and Climate Action

## THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT MUST WORK TO ENSURE THAT THE FOLLOWING DECISIONS ARE TAKEN AT COP28:

1. The conclusion of the **Global Stocktake** with a roadmap that ensures that gaps and shortcomings in existing climate policy are closed. Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) must be implemented at least by 2025, preferably even earlier. NDCs need revised climate targets by 2023 and new, more ambitious climate targets by 2035. Emissions from food systems must be taken into account in future.
2. Deciding on a **global adaptation goal**: Adaptation funding and adaptation programmes must be designed in such a way that they go beyond technological solutions and initiate a transformation. They must be guided by the principles of locally-led adaptation (LLA) to ensure the involvement of local actors from the support and implementation of national adaptation plans to the design of financing.
3. Agreement to **increase climate financing**: the 100 billion US dollars in annual climate financing promised by the industrialized countries must be made available this year. Financial commitments for adaptation to climate change must be doubled by 2025. A new financial target for the period after 2025 must include more funds than the 100 billion US dollars currently pledged.
4. Agreement to operationalize **the Loss and Damage Fund**: The fund must provide the most vulnerable countries with simplified access to financing, and donor countries must make early financial commitments to this fund. The new Loss and Damage Fund must also be able to draw on more innovative financing mechanisms in order to achieve the necessary level of investment.

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